

Saved or Lost?

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SERMON THREE

WHO, THEN, WILL BE SAVED?

Romans 10:8-13

“ . . . The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach;

“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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

WE members of churches have our faults, and they are not few.

But, in spite of our faults, in spite of the fact that, like the Church at Sardis, our **“works have not been found perfect before him,”** He has not forsaken us.

His appeal is that we remember what we have **“received and heard,”** and **“hold fast and repent”** (See Revelation 3:2-3). And having ears, it is ours to hear **“what the Spirit saith”** to the churches.

It is true of us, as it was of the Church at Philadelphia, that God has **“set before”** us **“an open door”** which **“no man can shut”** (Revelation 3:8).

And we have **“a little strength”** and have kept His Word, and have **“not denied”** His Name.

The text I have selected for this chapter deals with the question **“Who Then Will Be Saved?”** and I want us to consider carefully its teaching and reach conclusions that neither time nor hell can shake.

A very natural division of this text is,—The Word of Faith, The Way of Salvation, and The Work of the Spirit.

I. THE WORD OF FAITH.

Paul, writing to these Roman Christians, made a remark that is applicable to many of us—“**The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.**”

Then the word was not far away from them.

That is still truer of us. We are not like the heathen in some dark region in Africa or some deep jungle in India or some remote city in China—without a knowledge of the Truth. The large majority of us, even including our boys and girls, have had the advantage that Timothy enjoyed—a mother and a grandmother who knew God; (see II Timothy 1:5) and with many the additional advantage of a father and a grandfather to whom Jesus was both Saviour and Lord. All our lives long we have lived near the Word, beside an open Bible, and with the Word incarnate in the lives of our loved ones.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, interpreting the cry of the Syrophenician woman for help, tells us that her argument with Christ, in behalf of her demon-possessed daughter, involved this suggestion:

“Lord, you have come so near to me that I am not going to let you get away. I may be a dog, as you say; but I am not a dog out in the street, nor a wild dog off in the forest. I am a dog under the table, eating of the crumbs that fall from the children’s clumsy hands. Since I am in the same house with you, I am not willing to let you get away until you bless me.”

And the unconverted man attends church in an equal place of favor; he is in the same house with Christ. The Word is not far away from him; it is *nigh*; it is in his ears: “**that is the word of faith, which we preach.**” And he would never be able, in the final judgment, to say,—“Lord, I never had any opportunity to be saved; I never heard the Truth; I never knew that Christ came to stand in my stead and that He bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and that by merely believing I could be saved.”

The very closeness of the Word Incarnate leaves every such man without excuse. If he dies, without Christ, it will be because he would not have Him. He is here now; you are as near to Him as the blind men were when they cried for help, and He is not less willing to save now than He was then to give them sight. Oh, how true! “**The word is nigh thee.**”

Further: *The Word is fairly familiar.*

“**Even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.**”

There are very few unconverted men in America who have not, at times, taken portions of God’s Word into their mouths. They can quote it, and perhaps enough of it to mean salvation for them if they but believed it. Still further: It is “**in their hearts,**” as a convicting message and has made them feel their sinfulness and their need of a Savior. It is closer than hands or feet; and it that be not true, it is wholly their own fault.

Unfortunately, there are hundreds of people in America who have had the Word of God, like an atmosphere, all around them, all their lives, and yet they have disregarded it, neglected it, treated it with contempt. Like the atmosphere, it has been the means of untold blessings to them, and even that circumstance they have despised.

A little while ago, *The Watchman-Examiner* published an article, inspired by a statement in *The Churchman*, attributed to an alumnus of a great University who, sitting in the library of the same, heard the captain of the Varsity team put this strange question to him: "Say, Doc, who in thunder was Paul?"

Can you imagine it? Living in America—made the most blessed country in the world because of Bible influence—and not knowing who Paul was! Paul—the apostle of Christ; Paul—the author of fourteen books in the Biblical library; Paul—the most influential voice the world has heard since that of Jesus was stilled by His ascension; and yet this young college man knew not who the great apostle was! What inexcusable ignorance! What condemnable indifference! What disregard of all soul-interest!

I am wondering whether those of us who are mothers and fathers are able, and on bended knees—to say to God—as Mrs. Spurgeon, the mother of Charles, was able to say at her morning devotions: "Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish; and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment, if they lay not hold of Christ."

She knew that she had taught them the Way! She was absolutely assured in her own soul that she had not only made it plain by word of mouth, but had illustrated it in daily living. She was distressed lest, with such knowledge, they should wilfully reject God, and that she would have to testify against them in the day of judgment.

I appeal to parents and Sunday School teachers, and older brothers and sisters, and intimate friends—have we by precept and practice sought to make the Way plain so that if those who are dear to us miss it, it will not be because they did not know the Word—did not know that "**with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**"? (Romans 10:10).

The one greatest need of the average church, at this moment, is that its members should become teachers of others, monitors concerning the future, and men and women who practice, in the presence of others, the precepts of the Holy Word.

The Word of God is still effective.

It is effective when it is spoken; it is effective when it is lived. There are two classes of people who are showing the Way, and it is good fortune for the unsaved when they both combine in one: one is the class who teach and preach the Word; the other is the class who daily practice it.

The Word taught is a power; it "**shall not return void.**"

People often wonder how it happens that some famed evangelist, by whose preaching thousands have been turned to the Lord, falls by the wayside, and is finally discounted by men and apparently a castaway of God; and they ask: “How do you explain it?” “What good results he seemed to get”; or, “He seemed to accomplish such fine results.”

That is not even difficult! They preached the Word and the Word **“is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”** Paul said that he would rejoice if men **“preach the Word from envy”** even. Paul knew that the Word was **“the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”**

But, the Paul who combined the preaching of the Word with its constant practice is always more effective than a Peter whose serious slip, and whose profane denial, cast upon him a temporary shadow; or a Thomas whose doubts made his ministry less effective.

I have said it many times, and I repeat it—the infidel cannot, and dare not, expose himself too often to the preached Word. If he did, it would destroy his infidelity, convict him of sin, and compel him to cry to Christ for mercy.

I have had more than half a century in the ministry. I have never yet seen a man or woman who could sit through, even my poor ministry, for five successive nights and reject the Christ, resisting the Spirit.

The unsaved will go to hell, not because they did not know the way to heaven, but because they did not want to walk in it.

Every time I hold a meeting there are unsaved men that hear me once, but they are careful not to hear me too often.

A single night, and they are gone; and if they return at all, it is at the end of the meeting. They do not propose to expose their souls to the Gospel too often lest it should make it impossible for them to continue in their cherished sins.

Truly the Word **“is the power of God unto salvation.”**

There is only one way to escape that salvation and that is to refuse or fail to hear the Word.

No wonder, then, that Paul calls it **“The Word of Faith.”**

“Faith is the victory!”

II. THE WAY OF SALVATION.

This text tells us how “THE WORD” becomes “THE WAY.” We should expect that. The Bible teaches that Christ was the Word. John’s Gospel opens with this declaration:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1,4, 14).

Christ also said: **“I am the Way.”**

The “WORD” and the “WAY,” then, are the same. That is why, as the text teaches, the Word must have a heart reception. Faith must lay hold of a living Christ, and confession is the expression of heart-faith.

The Word must have a heart-reception.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

Mark you, it is not with the head merely! There are a great many people who believe on Jesus, in a way; they think such a man lived something like 1900 years ago! They believe that He walked among His fellows, and was a marvelous Teacher of men. Some of them believe that He wrought miracles, and might even consent that He rose from the dead. But one can believe all of that with the head and remain unsaved.

Head-belief is one thing; heart-belief is another.

Last summer at the Mound Conference, I heard Mr. Vance Havner. He touched upon the difference between head-belief and heart-belief, and said:

“There are some people who will not make any such distinction. They say: ‘Oh, no; there is no difference’.”

And then Mr. Havner remarked: “The only thing I am acquainted with whose head and heart are one and the same, is a cabbage!”

He did not say that faith was impossible to the head, but the text tells us that true faith is belief in the heart.

In other words, cold reason is one thing; affectionate response—emotions that control the will—is another thing. It is not the former but the latter that is essential to salvation.

From the beginning God intended that man and wife should be one. That is never true except when they are one in heart, one in affection. All the preachers of the land and all the ceremonies that have ever been written cannot combine into one, two people whose hearts are not united; and all the philosophies of men cannot make a Christian out of a man who merely accepts Christ with his head, but who does not yield to Christ with his heart.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

Then, this Way of Salvation involves another thing:

Faith must lay hold of a living Christ.

For thou “**shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead**” (Romans 10:9).

That, then, is the death-knell of modernism as a professed Christianity. One can talk learnedly of Jesus of Nazareth, and even affectionately of the great Exemplar Who once walked the earth, and pay the highest tribute, if he pleases, to His philosophy of life and His philosophy of religion; but if he does not believe that He is risen from the dead, he is not trusting the Christ of the New Testament—the true Christ, the only Christ with which the mind of man is familiar.

It makes very little difference how great a Teacher Jesus of Nazareth was; how high His moral standards; how sacred His personal convictions; if He is dead and His body has crumbled to dust, they that put their trust in Him have perished.

Dead men do not save. Thousands of no-swimmers, poor-swimmers, exhausted-swimmers, cramped-swimmers have been picked from the river, the lake or the sea, and saved; but never yet has one of them been dragged from a watery grave by the hands of a dead man.

It takes a living Christ to save. It takes One Who has conquered death and the grave, Who is alive forevermore, to stretch forth His hand and snatch from the power of Satan, from the icy fingers of death, the soul.

- It was a living Christ Who called back from the bier the widow’s son, and the daughter of Jairus, and Whose voice raised Lazarus from the grave.

- It was a living Christ Who said to the nobleman from Capernaum, “**Go thy way; thy son liveth.**”

And it was faith in the Word of that living Christ which rendered that nobleman instantly happy. He did not wait until he got home to find out whether it was so, but believed the Word that Christ had spoken unto him and instantly his happiness began. And if you trust Him today, today your joy commences. Annie Johnson Flint wrote:

“Trust may weaken, feeling pass away,
Thoughts grow weary, anxious or depressed;
I believe in God—and here I rest.”

But do you believe? That is answered by the next step. If you do believe, you will confess “**with the mouth.**”

That is what the text says. “**With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed**” (Romans 10:10-11).

Among the many things in Paul's ministry that I enjoy is his unwavering insistence and demand that we prove our profession.

He has made it extremely clear that mere sentiment is not enough. One may hold up his hand and say, "I believe," but according to this text that is not enough. If he believes he will be ready to say so. The Scriptures say: "**Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.**"

History rather proves that the truly redeemed of the Lord are willing to say so; are glad to say so. In fact, you can hardly keep them from saying so.

Two or three times Christ enjoined upon people that He blessed and healed, silence; there was hardly a one of them that could keep it.

You will remember that Mark records how "**there came a leper to him beseeching him and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter . . .**" (Mark 1:40-45).

In other words, he was so happy he could not keep still. He bubbled over! If you love the Lord you will not want to keep still.

My oldest brother's wife, Molly Gale, when a bit of a girl, was brought under conviction, and secretly sought the Lord; but, being young and timid, and doubtless made more afraid by Satan, she found it hard to step out and let all the people know her decision.

And so, after several nights of cringing fear, she eventually went to the service and purposely took the end seat of the pew next to the front one, and tenaciously clung to it, having decided that when the congregation stood to sing she would quietly and quickly slip around into the front without anyone seeing her.

Her cousin, Dr. Matt Riley, was the preacher, and when she made the pass, he clapped his hands and shouted aloud, "Bless God; here comes cousin Molly!"

Later, in talking to me about it, she said: "And so it was out, and I have been glad ever since that it got out that I, too, love the Lord."

So will every other man, woman and child who truly loves Him. If you are not ready to take your place openly for Him, not ready to frankly confess Him "**with the mouth,**" you cannot be saved until you are willing.

In Psalm 110:3 we read: **“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power “**

III. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

We do not expect any man or-woman to come to Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. He is the One Who convicts; He is the One Who sanctifies, and there is only one thing that can hinder that work of the Spirit, and that is unwillingness.

If His work is accomplished in the heart, then three things follow: The one who believes will not be ashamed; the one who loves will not be silent; and the sinner who calls on Christ will be accepted. These are the things the text teaches.

The one who believes will not be ashamed.

True faith will find a tongue for itself! Real belief will take its stand for what it believes in.

The one who loves will not be silent.

Husbands sometimes fail to express affection for their wives, and explain it on the ground that they are naturally non-demonstrative. A poor excuse! And, in my judgment, practically a lie. If you love her, you will let her know. You would not be content, as some people are, to tell her once; or, possibly under great stress, as some people do about their affection for Christ, admit it! No, no! True affection is like the strong vein that I used to see in the mountain springs of the South; it bubbles. It is like the mountain stream; it gets a voice to itself and murmurs all along the way to the sea.

A happy Christian is reported to have said to an Irish peddler: “It’s a grand thing, Pat, to be saved!”

“Sure,” answered Pat, “but I know something better than that.”

“Better than being saved?”

“Sure!”

“What is that?”

“Daily companionship with the Savior.”

Who can have it?

The Sinner Who Calls Upon Him Will Be Saved!

That is what the text says, isn’t it?

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

I found in my scrapbook, this week, a tract written by Charles H. Spurgeon, entitled “How I Found Christ.”

He says: “I had been for years in fearful distress of mind. The sun was blotted out of my sky; I had sinned against God and feared there was no hope for me. I attended all the places of worship in the town, but they did not make the way plain. One preacher preached on ‘The Sovereignty of God,’ but what was that to a poor sinner? Another thundered on ‘The Law,’ but that only condemned me. One morning I came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel with only a dozen or fifteen people in it. It was snowing and the minister failed to arrive; snowed up, I suppose.

“A poor man, a shoemaker, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was stupid; so much so that he had to stick to his text, and his text was, **‘Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.’** He was ignorant and did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was the text for me — **‘LOOK!’** I could do that. It is not lifting your finger or your foot either; it is just to look. A man need not go to college to learn how to look. You might be the biggest fool and yet you can look. A man need not be worth one thousand dollars a month to look; anybody can look; a child can look!

“Then the text said: **‘Look unto me’**; it told me of the One to Whom to look; not your looking to yourself; it is not your looking at other men; look to Jesus, the Christ; then he said: **‘all ye ends of the earth,’** and I knew that took me in; **‘and be ye saved.’**

“Ay, that was what I wanted!

“And the Primitive Methodist shoemaker cried: ‘Young man, look to Jesus Christ and you will be saved!’ I looked and I was saved!”

That is the way; and that is the only way. It is the look of Faith; it is trust, and that only.

I doubt if there is any better illustration of the way to be saved than F. B. Sleeper gave us many years ago.

He said: “The other morning I stood in the stairway of our basement. My little girl was up in the kitchen, and the stairway was dark. I could see her but she could not see me. I said: ‘Darling, jump down and I will catch you.’

She answered with timidity and fear, ‘Papa, it is dark down there; I can’t see you!’

“‘I know it’s dark, darling, but I can see you. Jump! Come on.’

“‘I’m afraid I’ll fall and get hurt!’

“‘Oh, then you don’t trust your Daddy?’

“‘Yes, I do.’

“‘How much do you trust me? Do you trust me enough to jump?’

“‘Yes, I do.’

“‘Come on, then.’

“‘She made a spring and, of course, she landed in my arms. I would not have thought of having her do that if I did not know that I could catch her safely and without hurt.’”

Do you suppose Jesus Christ would ask you to trust yourself to Him if He did not know the same? Do you trust Him? How much do you trust Him? Enough to leap into His outstretched arms?

~ end of sermon 3 ~

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