

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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SERMON TEN

THE GREATEST WORD IN THE WORLD

“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” (John 3:16).

It was Martin Luther who called this verse “the Gospel in miniature.” Someone else has called it “the Gospel in a nutshell.” Many people say they do not know enough about the Bible to be saved. All you must know to become a Christian is found in this verse. It is the mightiest word God ever spoke to the children of men. It is simple, sufficient, sure. There is no possibility of misunderstanding it, of misinterpreting it.

Let us study this verse from these three aspects. The outline is found in the text.

First, it speaks of lost sinners—**whosoever believeth . . . shall not perish.**

Second, it tells of a lifted Saviour—**God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.**

Third, it promises a lasting salvation—**Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

Let me repeat it. This text speaks of lost sinners, a lifted Saviour, a lasting salvation.

That is all there is to the Bible. That is all there is to Christianity. If these things are true, we have hope. If they are not true, then of all of God's creation we are the most miserable. But, thank God, they are true. When God says, “. . . **should not perish,**” He describes the condition of all mankind. Every soul out of Christ—young or old, Jew or Gentile, educated or ignorant, rich or poor, without exception, without escape, without excuse—every soul out of Jesus Christ is lost in sin and is on the road to eternal destruction and despair.

If you are not in Christ, you are lost—eternally lost, helplessly lost. You are inevitably, inescapably going to hell. But that is not all. If you are not in Christ, you are lost already. You are lost to God, lost to the Church, lost to yourself, lost to your loved ones, lost to your friends, lost to your business associates, lost in life, lost in death, lost at the judgment, lost through an endless eternity.

When I say you are lost in life I mean just that. God says, **“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”** Again, **“Without faith it is impossible to please [God].”** We also read, **“He that cometh to God must believe that he is.”**

You are involved in all these things.

- You have not exercised faith.
- You have not come to God.
- You are not pleasing to Him.

The blessings and bounties which God has given you are using for Satan, for sin, for self. Your life is a witness against the Church and not for it. You are a stumbling block in the advance of the kingdom of God.

- If you are in business, you are lost to your business associates.
- If you are a soldier, you are lost to your fellow soldiers.
- If you live at home, you are lost to your loved ones in the home.

Why? Instead of pointing them to God and heaven by your own salvation and consecrated Christian living, you are dragging them to the Devil and into hell by your own unbelieving, undedicated disobedience. You are sowing the seed of influence all about you. The thought that should give you pause is this. Eventually you may be saved, you may accept Christ as your personal Saviour, but what about the seed you have sown along the way? There are people all about you; there are people coming after you who will stumble into hell because of your influence. You will face them at the judgment bar of God. Their blood will be on your hands. You will go to heaven; they will go into torment. The seed of unbelief which you are sowing others will reap in a harvest of pain, of penalty, of punishment, of anguish, of agony.

You are lost in death.

One day while driving to church I heard a choir singing, “I want to die easy when I die. I want to die easy when I die. I want to die easy when I die.” It has been a number of years since I heard that marvelous choir singing that thrilling chorus, but it is still ringing in my ears.

Listen to me, men, women, children. Listen, listen!

- You may not accept my invitation to come to Christ, but you are going to die—and I want to die easy when I die.
- You may not make a public confession of your faith in Christ, but you are going to die—and I want to die easy when I die.
- You may not be baptized and join a church, but you are going to die—and I want to die easy when I die.
- You may never give your life to the Saviour, accepting His precious blood for your salvation, becoming a blessing instead of a curse to your fellow men, but you are going to die—and, thank God, I am going to die easy when I die.

I have trusted Christ as my Saviour. I have given Him my life in service.

Picture yourself at the hour of death. The last minutes of life are facing you. They fly past. The death rattle is in your throat. The death dew is on your forehead. Your life's vigor is oozing out of your being. All you can think of is that you have rejected Christ, said "no" to the Gospel, trodden Calvary's blood underfoot. It is a terrible thing to die a lost soul.

You are lost at the judgment, lost throughout an endless eternity.

You may escape me; you may never open your Bible, you may resist the Holy Spirit; but when the police officer of God, the death angel, comes for you, you cannot escape him; you cannot deny him; you cannot evade him. It makes no difference where you die. You can have your body cremated and your ashes scattered to the four howling winds of the earth, but the mighty power of God will bring your ashes together, and with body and soul you will stand before the dread judgment tribunal. You will face all the deeds done in the body.

You are traveling toward the last assize. Just as sure as there is a God in heaven, just as sure as your mother gave you birth, just as sure as the racing blood pounds in your veins, just as surely will you face God at the judgment. Christians have had their sins judged, punished, pardoned in Calvary's Cross. We, the children of God, have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. But not you, if you have not accepted Christ as your Saviour. Unsaved soul, Jesus is not your Advocate, but your Judge. You will face His wrath, not His mercy. You will hear of His doom, not His deliverance. Eternity will record and witness your banishment from His holy presence.

You are lost if you are not in Christ.

Whether you belong to a church or not, whether you make a pretense of religion or not, whether you were sprinkled or immersed, whether you were reared in a Christian home or not, unless you have been born again, you are lost. Unless the Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, you are lost.

If you want to know what it means for a soul to be lost, if you want to know the terrors of the lost condition of a soul out of Christ, you may know it. You may see it. Come with me to Calvary. Stand in the shadow of the Cross. See the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the only begotten Son of God, stretched out on the tree. See the torment, the shame, the heartache, the heartbreak, the blood. Remember that every second of that indescribable agony, every drop of that precious blood is a warning to every lost soul, outside of that Cross, outside of that blood, outside of that atonement, that the wages of sin is death, that the doom of unbelief is hell. Do not dismiss these facts and say that you have enough time. You are lost now, and this may be the last time God will open His arms of love to give you the opportunity to escape. You are lost, not by the authority of Hyman Appelman, not by the authority of the Church, but by the unchangeable, irrevocable decree of God's Word, by the authority of God's Book, by the testimony of Christ's bloodstained Cross.

But thanks be unto God, I do not have to stop there. Jesus did not stop there. The mightiest word God ever uttered does not stop there. God sent His Son into the world to provide for each one of us a way of escape, a way out of this lost condition. That provision is the lifted Saviour.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Where was Jesus lifted up? How was Jesus lifted up? The Bible is specific in its statements.

First He was lifted on the tree—that bloodstained and cursed tree of Calvary. Paul says, **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”** Peter says, **“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”**

Hallelujah for Jesus! Hallelujah for the Cross! Glory to God for that tree! If there were no other story in all the Bible, if there were no other message except that bloody Cross, that would be enough to constrain each one of us to come to Jesus, Oh, the torment and the hellishness of that atoning agony! Tell me, what kind of heart do you have that you can reject such love? What kind of blood runs in your veins that you can refuse such grace? How can you look at that tree and turn away from such mercy?

But that is not all. He was lifted out of the tomb.

Paul says, **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”**

Thank God for the first Easter Day, for that first Resurrection morning. Joseph’s tomb is empty. Jesus did not remain dead. There was a third day on which the stone was rolled away from the tomb. There was a glorious, victorious hour in which Jesus was raised from the dead. Do you believe Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? Was not that the mightiest triumph this world has ever seen? Yes and no. There is one mightier than that. There is an exaltation even greater than the Resurrection.

Jesus was not only lifted on the tree, not only lifted out of the tomb, but, thank God, He was lifted to the right hand of the Father on high.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Do you know what that means? Jesus is at the right hand of God, vested with all the power, the majesty, the glory, the authority of time and eternity. Do you know what that means? It means that God took back His Son unto Himself, embraced Him in His own arms, pressed Him to His own heart, sat Him down at His own right hand, to show His eternal acceptance of and satisfaction with His Son's atoning work. It means that Jesus is on the throne. It means that this Jesus now offers Himself to you as your Saviour, and His precious blood for your salvation. You may depend on Jesus' promises because Jesus is alive, at the right hand of God. It is enough to make anybody shout the endless praises of God. What a message! What a Gospel! What glorious good news!

Today Jesus Christ is being lifted up by the love, the lives, the loyalty of consistent, blood-washed Christians the world over. This humble message, our songs, our prayers, our testimonies, our visitations, our invitations—all are united in the glorious work of lifting Jesus before the judgment-bound hearts and souls of sinners. Oh, believe on Him! Receive Him! Accept Him! Confess Him!

My last word, nay, God's last word in this text is an offer, an appeal, an exhortation. God comes to each of us and says, ***"You are a sinner, lost, on the road to hell, with no help in yourself. I love you with an everlasting love. I proved it. I sent My Son to die for your sins, to die in your stead. Today if you will believe on My Son, if you will accept My Son as your personal Saviour, I will save you with an ever-lasting salvation."***

Let us consider now the third aspect of our text: a lasting salvation.

It is a lasting salvation because the Passion of Christ is lasting.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? . . . And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

The Passion of Christ on the Cross provided an everlasting atonement, universal, individual, for every sinner, for every sin, for all time and all eternity.

God does not require further sacrifice. It was sufficiently, abundantly, satisfactorily, eternally accomplished by Jesus on Calvary's Cross. You need add nothing to it. God requires nothing more from you. It is finished.

This salvation is lasting not only because the Passion of Christ is lasting, but because the promises of the Bible are lasting. **“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life . . . All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

This promise, not of a preacher, not of a church, but of the Son of God, guarantees that our salvation is lasting. It is a definite promise, and means exactly what it says. It comes from One who has never broken a promise He has given. You may rely upon it fully.

Our salvation is lasting not only because the Passion is lasting, not only because the promise is lasting, but, thank God, because the power behind the Passion, the power behind the promise is also lasting, everlasting.

I can make a promise to you and mean it sincerely, but I am a mere man, and a hundred things may force me to break that promise. It is not so with God. His promises originate in omniscience and are supported by omnipotence. Neither time nor eternity, neither circumstances nor conditions can change His mighty authority, His matchless love, His superlative power. The power behind this passion is not man's, but God's.

Paul said, **“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”** Jude said, **“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”** Peter said, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

What more can I say? You know whether you are a sinner or not. You can fool me. You can fool each other. You cannot fool yourself, and you cannot fool God. You know you are lost if you have never accepted Christ, if you have never taken a public stand for Jesus, if you have never confessed Him before men.

I have told you the tremendous truths that Jesus Christ was lifted on the tree, lifted out of the tomb, lifted to the throne.

You know that these great facts are true, that the salvation thus obtained is lasting because of the lasting Passion, because of the lasting promises, because of the lasting power. There is one more question to be answered. Here it is. You ask, "Preacher, tell us, what must we do to avail ourselves of this lasting salvation?"

My text will answer this question.

"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 . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . . 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."

If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, if you believe that He died for your sins, if you believe that God raised Him from the dead, if you believe that He is in heaven interceding for you, if you believe that He can and will save you if you trust Him, that is all God seeks of you.

If in the depths of your heart there is a desire for Christ, a yearning for the forgiveness of sins, a longing to be saved, accept Him today. Just as you are, accept and publicly confess Christ as your Saviour. Jesus said, **"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."**

Come! Jesus is anxiously waiting for you. Come now!

~ end of sermon 10 ~

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