



Crossway Chapel, Fox Valley

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

Lesson 4: Salvation



SALVATION: UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEED FOR THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

What is God's solution to man's problem?

When God gives people a clear understanding of the problem of sin in their lives, they will often come away asking the question, "Then what must I do?" God's answer is, "You must *turn away* from your sin in repentance and *turn toward* My Son Jesus Christ, believe in Him, and be saved." The ability to truly believe in this solution comes from God alone and is found in His gospel, or "*the good news*" of Jesus Christ. The miraculous work of God in this entire process is called "*salvation*."

Any person trapped in a dangerous or deadly situation like a blazing fire, a flood, or beneath a building leveled by an earthquake would be elated to know if help was on the way. It would be, to say the least, "good news!" How much more would their joy be if they knew that a rescue was possible?

The "good news" in this case, is God's announcement of the work of Jesus Christ in rescuing people from sin and reconciling them to Himself. This salvation is the greatest expression of God's grace and mercy to sinners.

The Purpose of Lesson 4 is:

To explain how the gospel of Jesus Christ is given to men and women as God's only solution to the problem of sin in their lives. Salvation answers the question, "*How can I be reconciled to God?*"

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Defining God's Work

SALVATION is the gracious and merciful work of God to give new spiritual life to sinners through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Men and women who are saved by God are joyfully freed from the control of sin and given a **NEW LIFE** to live for Jesus Christ, His desires, and His mission on earth.

Some things to CELEBRATE:

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is not found in the acceptance of religion or the promise to do good things for God. It is not about carrying around the burden of all that must be done to make God happy. It's not found in the number of prayers prayed, church services attended, or dollars given to religious organizations.

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is one filled with God's complete, overwhelming, continual, *and yet undeserved* blessing through His Son Jesus Christ. It's a life that is characterized by eternal peace with God and never-ending hope found in all that He gives through Jesus Christ.

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** does not guarantee easier living, pleasant circumstances, or physical comfort. In fact Jesus says that it could get even harder because of all who oppose Him and His teaching in the world. However, the joy, hope, and anticipation of being with Jesus Christ forever, far outweigh the temporary battles and potential suffering.

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is not meant by God to be boring, burdensome, dull, or tedious. Rather, it's a life of unending joy and freedom from sin!

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is seen in new and vibrant affection for God and new patterns of behavior that result. It is characterized by a heart that perseveres and stands firm for the long haul. Christ Jesus becomes so supremely valuable above all else, that nothing can satisfy the needs and desires of the heart like Him.

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is only found when a person turns from their life of sin and serving self to believe fully in Jesus Christ to forgive their sin and restore a right relationship with God (repentance and faith).

This **NEW LIFE THROUGH SALVATION** is a reality only because God graciously and mercifully applies the righteousness of Jesus Christ to sinners who will repent and believe. It is by His righteousness alone that God views sinners as worthy to walk in a relationship with Him. See Page 13.

Some things to carefully consider:

Did I leave the previous lesson (Man and Sin) with a clear and Biblical understanding of the problem of sin in my life? Is that understanding leaving me with an urgent sense that something needs to be done to solve that problem? Or, is there a joyful sense of gratitude that something has been done? Am I considering this with humility, knowing that God is my Sovereign Creator and I am a sinful creature?

Am I ready to hear the solution if need be and is God helping me realize that there is deliverance and joy in it? How do I need to think about the work of Jesus Christ and my faith in it? Which "side" of salvation am I on? Have I truly believed in "the gospel" so as to be eternally rescued from sin and live a life no longer for myself and my own desires?

ETERNAL LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

We either have it or we don't...

1 John 5:11-12

*If you have the _____
you have the _____.*

*If you do not have the _____
you do not have the _____.*

If you DO “have” His Son, then you know the joy of salvation and possessing NEW LIFE in Christ! What were the things that He did in your life to bring you to salvation? Do you remember what things were like before God saved you? What is different now?

If you DO NOT “have” His Son, the Bible says that you are in need of Him and the forgiveness of sin He offers. What do you think needs to happen in order for you to GAIN Jesus Christ and the NEW LIFE that can be found in Him?

Once you have taken a good look at Lesson 4, come back to this question and consider it again. How can you be forgiven and reconciled to God for all eternity?

Consider those who have tried to make it happen their own way based on their own works...

4. Look closely at **VERSE 39**. The Jews were trying to free themselves from sin by following the _____ of Moses. Was it possible for them to do it good enough for God (that is, perfectly)? Can you think of ways that you might be trying to erase your sin that are similar to this?

5. How did many of the Jews respond to Paul's teaching initially? See **VERSES 42 AND 43**. *Note: A "proselyte" is someone who is not a Jew by birth that converts to their religion.*

6. Once the crowds gathered, things changed. How did they act once they saw that so many others were interested in the teaching about Jesus and His good news according to **VERSES 44-50**?

7. The Jews became more concerned with **THEIR RELIGION** than their salvation from sin. Who ended up believing in Jesus to forgive sin in this whole event?

4. In **VERSES 22-29**, Paul spells out a powerful comparison between the one true God and their UNKNOWN god. What are some of the key differences he points out?

5. Besides other religions who literally worship other “gods,” what are some of the things that our culture “worships” instead of the one true God of the Bible?

6. What is the challenge, found in **VERSES 30 AND 31**, to these people as well as to all men and women who have not come to know Jesus Christ?

All men everywhere should _____.

7. In **VERSES 32-34**, there are 3 different responses to Paul’s preaching about the resurrection of Jesus. What are they?

Some began to _____.

Some said “_____.”

Some joined him and _____.

Put the two answers in the boxes on page 10 together and you have God’s answer to our question, “How can I be reconciled to God for all eternity?”

_____ & _____

That’s the answer! “REPENT” is a great word! It means to turn away from sin and living life for myself. And “BELIEVE,” you guessed it, means to turn toward the Savior, Jesus Christ who can take AWAY my sin and give me a NEW LIFE to live for HIM.

SO WHAT ABOUT ME?

Which one am I?

At this point, it’s a matter of eternity to stop and ask, “WHO AM I IN THE STORIES?” You have considered some of the events that took place in these two accounts and need to take the time to think about where you fit in. Use the questions below to help think through what these portions of the Bible show you about your own heart and life. Again, try to be humble and teachable and simply ask God to show you what you need to know...

How can I avoid becoming like the Jews who were interested at first but became hostile once they figured out that Jesus would change their whole understanding about God and their religion?

In what ways am I like the Jews who rejected the truth of Jesus and His forgiveness of sin?

On a scale ranging from hostility and blasphemy against Jesus to joy and peace in Jesus, where does my life fit? Is there really a “middle ground?”

Are there ways that I have been trying to please God by my own power and works of religion? What are they?

What needs to happen in my life for me to become like the Gentiles who rejoiced in ACTS 13:48 and those who believed in ACTS 17:34?

What idols do I worship? What things are there that are more important to me than God Himself? They don't have to be statues or alters!

Am I showing my own ignorance of the one true God by continuing to love and value other things more than God?

Which of the three responses to the teaching of Jesus am I going to give? (Sneer, wait until later, or BELIEVE!)

We're learning that salvation is not about "religion." It is not accomplished through all of the good things a person does or says and it's not accomplished through human wisdom, intellect, or knowledge. God does not tally up the good and the bad and decide who is worthy based on the balance at the end of life.

In fact by God's Holy standard there is nothing good enough in us to make us right with Him (reconciled). So, how is it that HE brings us into a right and loving relationship with Himself? That's what the cross is all about! That's what the good news is all about and it's wrapped up in the five incredible Bible verses below.

We've already learned that God is fully justified in His punishment of sinners. But because He is a God of love and generosity, He does not leave us without hope of avoiding the consequences of our sin. Instead, He sent a Savior who became our SUBSTITUTION and who SATISFIED God's judgment for sin on the cross. Take a look at what He did and how it can change a sinner's life forever!

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

SUBSTITUTION AND SATISFACTION

How Jesus takes our sin and covers us with His righteousness

1 Peter 2:21-25

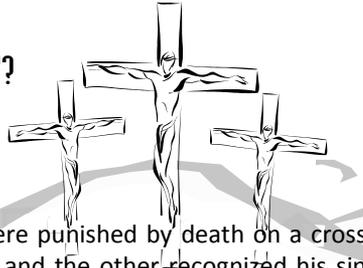
1. Carefully list the things that these verses say Jesus did. Pay careful attention to the specific "action" words He undertook. What does it say specifically about what Jesus did with our sin?

CAN YOU LEARN FROM A DYING THIEF?

Lord Please Have Mercy on Me!

Luke 22:39-43

When Jesus was crucified, two criminals were punished by death on a cross alongside Him. One of them insulted Jesus and the other recognized his sin and begged for mercy as they hung there together. This dying thief teaches us all how to come to Christ in repentance. Look at the interaction in Luke 23:39-43 and notice what needs to happen to be reconciled to God. By faith alone, everyone who desires to be a true Christ-follower must:



1. FEAR GOD

If you need to be reconciled to God, You could pray something like this:

"God, I know that I am not worthy to be accepted by You. I know the punishment for my sin is eternal and I need to be rescued by You."

2. CONFESS SIN

"I am guilty of sin like the Bible says and I have tried to live life MY way. I know that I deserve Your punishment for my sin. I need You to forgive me."

3. RECOGNIZE JESUS

"Thank You for sending Your Son to die in my place that I might have HIS righteousness. I believe that His death was sufficient and want to rely upon it to be forgiven. Thank You that He rose from the dead to give me NEW LIFE."

4. CRY OUT FOR MERCY

"Please have mercy on me, forgive me, and change me that I might live this NEW LIFE with Jesus as my Lord."

5. RECEIVE NEW LIFE

"I know and trust that you are the only true source of eternal life and forgiveness so that I can be right with my loving Creator God."

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds...

...but this man has done nothing wrong.

And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

HAVING COME THIS FAR

Where are you on the journey to know Christ...the Salvation journey?

Do you remember the questions at the bottom of page 5? Turn back and take a look again. Hopefully, if you have come this far, the questions are being answered and you know how you can be reconciled with God.

Maybe God has even helped you to become like the dying thief and you have gone to your knees and prayed to be reconciled to Him. If this is truly a reality, then the angels in heaven are celebrating (see Luke 15:1-10)!

If your heart is genuine and God has truly saved you, the Bible makes it clear that your new life will look very different from the world and from the way you were before God saved you. Yes, a true Christian will continue to fail and will by no means be perfect until he or she is with Jesus but there will be certain changes and characteristics that continually grow and become more and more evident as a result of God's saving work in your life. It's a fantastic journey where God is at work empowering you to be a trophy of His grace!

THE MARKS OF A TRUE CHRIST-FOLLOWER

What the Bible says about those who truly repent and believe in the Lord Jesus...

- *The Bible calls you a NEW CREATION (2 Cor. 5:15-17).*
- *God's Spirit lives in you, helps you to live as He desires, and becomes a witness to your own heart that God has saved you (Romans 8:15, 16, Gal. 5:16-26, 1 John 4:13).*
- *You are forgiven of God (Colossians 2:13-14, 1 John 1:9).*
- *You are one of God's own (adopted) (John 1:12, 13, Gal. 3:26, 4:6-7, Romans 8:14-17).*
- *You will receive eternal life (John 3:16-18, 1 John 5:11-13).*
- *The overall pattern of your life will demonstrate a deep desire to please God. You will be motivated by love for Him above all else (John 14:21, 1 John 2:2-6).*
- *You will have a love for others and will deny yourself (Matthew 16:24, John 13:34, 35, 1 John 3:11-14).*

- *You will have a hunger to read and understand God's Word (1 Peter 2:2, Psalm 19:7-14, Psalm 119).*
- *You will have a desire and a constant need to depend on God in prayer (Psalm 34:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*
- *You will never lose the gift of salvation God has given you. The proof of true salvation in your life is the presence of undying perseverance and "holding fast" to your confidence and hope in faith "firm until the end (John 6:37-40, Romans 8:29-39, Hebrews 3:6 and 14)."*
- *You will desire to serve and have a need to be near other believers and spiritual leaders in the local church in order to be strengthened and encouraged in your faith in Jesus Christ on a regular basis (Ephesians 4:11-16, Hebrews 10:23-25)*
- *You will have a desire to seek out other lost sinners and tell them about the NEW LIFE you have been given in Christ. You will desire that they learn the same joy of being freed from sin (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 4:20, Romans 9:1-6, 2 Corinthians 4:13).*
- *What has happened in your life is not like a vaccination that you never need to think about. It is more like a life-long therapy that changes everything about you.*
- *This is not "fire insurance" to keep you from eternal separation from God in hell. Rather, it is a deep, loving, and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ in which you receive His blessings and desire with all your heart to love and worship Him.*
- *You will certainly not be perfect now or ever in this life. You will fail and choose to do the wrong thing over and over again. Every Christian does! But, you will not be able to continue living a sinful or selfish lifestyle without tremendous conviction or discipline from God.*
- *You will always need to keep putting your trust in the right place. It is only because of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection that you can be forgiven and reconciled with God. You'll need to keep coming back to this truth again and again.*
- *You now have a Savior who is sympathetic about your weaknesses. He is called your "Advocate." He has a "throne of grace" that you can run to at all times to receive mercy and find grace to help in a time of need (1 John 2:1-2, Hebrews 4:14-16).*
- *This NEW LIFE is all about running to that throne with all your might!*

THE **BIG PICTURE**

From beginning to end, God is the Author and Finisher of your Salvation...

There is a miraculous “chain” of events that takes place in order for sinners to be saved that the Bible talks about. The truths below show us that the miracle of salvation is in every way a work of God. What was His predetermined plan? How did He do it? Take a look, and give Him thanks that He went to such great lengths to save sinners for His own glory!

GOD CHOSE

sinners to be His children before the earth was formed.
(Ephesians 1:4, 5, Romans 9:23, 1 Thessalonians 1:4)

GOD CALLS

sinners in such a way that they cannot resist.
(John 6:30-44, Romans 8:28-30, Galatians 1:15, 16)

GOD REGENERATES

the heart of sinners so that they are able to repent and believe.
(John 1:11-13, Titus 3:5)

GOD GIVES

faith and repentance in order for sinners to be saved.
(Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 7:8-11)

GOD JUSTIFIES

sinners by punishing Christ in their place and giving them His righteousness.
(Romans 3:23-26, 5:1, 16-17, 8:28-30)

GOD MAKES SINNERS HOLY

and acceptable in His sight.
(1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 10:10-14)

GOD WILL GLORIFY

those who have been saved with Christ.
(Romans 8:28-30, Philippians 3:20, 21, 1 John 3:2)

KEY VERSES FOR MEMORY AND MEDITATION:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

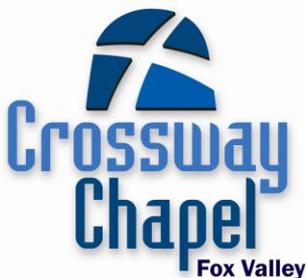
The words of Jesus Christ in Luke 4:18-19

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 2:21-25



Gospel Foundations, Lesson 4

SALVATION

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEED
FOR THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Serving, loving, and leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

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