

1-16-202, COTR Texarkana

Title: What Does it Mean to Be Saved?

Purpose: Proclaim what Biblical salvation is and provoke people to live like they're saved.

Truth for Today: True believers follow Jesus because they love Him.

Text: Acts 11:20-26

Topic: Saved, Salvation, Conversion, Born Again, Maturity

Series Title: The Big 10...the Path to Spiritual Maturity

Series Purpose: Provoke people to actively pursue spiritual maturity by applying the Big 10 causes for spiritual growth.

What Does it Mean to Be Saved?

- I. Introduction: MLK video/ prayer; Ushers Big 10 flyer, **Picture Proverbs Challenge**
 - A. Last week we began a series called, The Big 10...the Path to Spiritual Maturity. It's about the power of daily disciplines and experiences proven to produce spiritual maturity. **[Heb 5:12-14 (NLT)]** You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the **basic things** about God's word. **You are like babies** who need milk and cannot eat solid food...14 Solid food is for those who are **mature...**] Spiritual growth and maturity are the goal of the Christian life.
 - B. Text: **[Acts 11:20-26 (NLT)]** ...some of the believers...went to Antioch...began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. 21...a large number of these Gentiles **believed and turned to the Lord**...26...It was at Antioch that the believers were first called **Christians.**] A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus and turns/ repents and follows Him. They experienced 'salvation' and were 'saved' but what does this mean?
 - C. Today we'll talk about the starting place for Christianity, salvation. I'm convinced many people who think they're saved aren't and many who are saved don't fully understand what it means. We'll answer 4 questions: (1) What does it mean to be saved? (2) How do I get saved/ born again? (3) How do I know if I am saved? (4) How do saved people live?
 - D. Title: What Does it Mean to Be Saved?
 - E. Truth for Today: True believers follow Jesus because they love Him.
- II. **What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what?**
 - A. I asked the technology goddess Siri on my phone what it meant, and she said it's saving income and not spending it. She's clueless about the most important thing in life.
 - B. Def. saved/ salvation: To be forgiven of your sins, to have sin's guilt before God removed and escape sin's judgment in hell; to be justified and declared righteous before God, through faith in Jesus Christ; to receive the gift of eternal life.
 - C. The foundation upon which our salvation rests is, **[Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)]** God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.] Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation because of the Scripture.
 - D. Salvation is conversion, a spiritual rebirth. **[John 3:2-6 (NLT)]** ...Nicodemus...2...came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that **God has sent you to teach us...** 3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, **unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.**" 4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old

man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" 5 Jesus replied...6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but **the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.**]

1. Becoming a Christian is more than an intellectual embrace of Biblical truth. We're not converted because we're born into a Christian family, go to church, help people or do good works. It's a work of the Holy Spirit when we respond to His conviction.

III. How do I get saved/ born again? (Look at salvation as a process.)

- A. (1) The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and our need for God. (2) We believe in God's solution to our sin, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the only Savior of the world. (3) Genuine belief causes us to repent of sin and start following the Lord Jesus Christ.
 1. The uniqueness of Christianity is the cross of Jesus Christ through which atonement for our sins was made. Our response, [John 3:16–17 (NKJV)] For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**] Belief is more than intellectual assent. True believing produces action, i.e., repentance and following Jesus E.g., fire alarm sounds
- B. When/ how salvation happens is different for people. I was by myself in a Navy bootcamp and prayed to receive Christ, P Mike was in a football chapel service and raised his hand, the thief on the cross told Jesus remember me, some people are in a church service and answer an altar call.
 1. The important thing isn't where we are or the exact words we say, it's when we yield to the Holy Spirit's drawing, reach out to Jesus to save us, and begin following Him.

IV. How do I know if I am saved?

- A. Reliance on Biblical truth, not feelings. [Ro. 10:9 (NIV)] If you **declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"** and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.] [1 John 1:9 (NIV)] **If we confess our sins,** he is faithful and just and will **forgive us our sins** and purify us from all unrighteousness.] Faith trusts in the truth of God's Word whether we feel saved or not. This is especially true when we struggle with sin, satan condemns us and makes us doubt our salvation.
- B. Is there evidence to prove I'm saved? I.e., If I genuinely believe and am following Jesus, the way I live life will show it. If there's no evidence/ fruit/ change, I may not truly believe. [Luke 3:7–14 (NLT)] When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said...8 **Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.** Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing...10 The crowds asked, "What should we do?" 11 John replied, "...If you have food, share it with those who are hungry." 12...tax collectors...13 He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires..." I.e. Genuine faith produces repentance/ turning to God and we change how we live.
- C. I'm not trying make you doubt your salvation but examine yourself to see if your faith is real. [2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT)] **Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine.** (NCV) **Test yourselves to see if you are living in the faith.** You know that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you fail the test.] I fear many people have shaken the preacher's hand to be saved but never truly believed and repented. E.g., Funeral High School boy. I don't know if he was truly saved and backslidden. Only God knows. I don't want to see how

much I can sin and still go to heaven. It's not worth risking our eternal soul. I fear many people are fooling themselves and were never truly converted.

V. How should saved people live?

- A. Saved people live by the 2 great Commandments, [Mark 12:28–31 (NLT)]...“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” 29 Jesus replied...30 you must **love the Lord your God with all your heart**, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ 31 The second is equally important: ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’ No other commandment is greater than these.”] We can live by rules, “don’t cuss, smoke or chew or hang around those who do.” or Love God and love people.
- B. Saved people believe in Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord: Their life is dedicated to obeying and serving the Lord. [John 14:15 (NLT)] “**If you love me, obey my commandments.**” True believers don’t just have feelings about Jesus; we obey and follow Jesus because we love Him. [Luke 9:23–25 (NLT)]...“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must **give up your own way (NIV deny themselves)**, take up your cross daily, and **follow me.**”] This is the total antithesis to our self-centered hedonistic culture but it’s evidence we’ve repented. [Vs 24] If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 25 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?] If we say we believe in Jesus but aren’t trying to live a righteous life and follow Him, we’re fooling ourselves. Professing Christians who aren’t following Jesus in obedience, service and right living are either immature or not saved. Being a Christian is more than going to heaven when we die. It’s about living a godly life and serving the Lord daily.
1. Tension of faith and works. Saved people do good works because we’re saved. We don’t do good works to be saved.
- C. Saved people try to resist sin and worldliness but keep going when they fall. [Romans 7:15–25 (NLT)] I don’t really understand myself, for **I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate...**19 **I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.** 20 But if I do what I don’t want to do...**it is sin living in me that does it...**22 I love God’s law with all my heart. 23 **But** there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the **sin that is still within me.** 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord...] Illustrate look at cross when pulled into sin.
1. Christian people aren’t perfect. We sin, but when we do, we acknowledge it, ask forgiveness and work at changing. Contrast: people who aren’t saved sin without regret and often defend it.
- D. This is what saved people do. We love God, we love people, we obey and serve the Lord, we try to do right and try to stop sinning. We don’t live like this to be saved; but because we are saved. We love Jesus and are in a lifelong pursuit of spiritual maturity.
1. **Picture Big 10 flyer**

VI. Conclusion What do you want your spiritual life to be like in 2022? Are you satisfied where you are, or do you want to mature and grow spiritually?

- A. Paul, one of the greatest Christians who ever lived. **[Phil. 3:10–15 (NCV)] I want to know Christ** and the power that raised him from the dead. I want to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death...13...I know that I have not yet reached that goal, but there is one thing I always do. **Forgetting the past** and **straining toward what is ahead**, 14 **I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize** for which God called me...15 All of us who are **spiritually mature** should think this way, too...
- B. As we start 2022, let's not be content where we are. Let's leave the past behind and commit to grow spiritually and become the person the Lord created us to be.

VII. Response

- A. Prayer
- B. Souls

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.