

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
SOTERIOLOGY
THE STUDY OF SALVATION
PART 1

This morning in our series Foundation of Faith we are going to be looking at Soteriology or the study of salvation. Now for many of you this is something you already know, you understand and that is great. The problem is that many don't understand this and many are being swayed by the false teaching on this subject. I don't want you to believe what I have to say regarding this issue. I don't want you to believe what Calvary Chapel believes regarding this issue. That is not important. What I want you to believe is what God says regarding this issue of salvation in His Word, the Bible!

Let me give you a few examples to show you what this new salvation is all about and who is included in it. First of all, when you look at the *religions* of the world, every one of them has a works salvation. You have to do this or not do that and you will make it in, wherever that may be. Others include Christ but add works into the mix to be saved. For instance, the Catholic Church truly believes that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary for our sins but the work was not completed by Jesus. You need to go to Mass, you have to go to confession, communion and on-and-on it goes. And even with all that, as a Catholic, you will never make it into Heaven with all those good works, you must go to Purgatory to atone for your sins and once you have done that, you will enter into Heaven! So it is a salvation by Christ, our good works and our own punishment for our sins that gets us into Heaven, according to the Roman Catholic Church.

Let me show you what I mean and please understand that these quotes come from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Now you may doubt that or find it hard to believe and thus, I will show you what they believe and the error that damns people to Hell and not to Heaven! Listen to their doctrine, what they teach from their own words.

“The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1129).

“The priests are ‘appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1539).

“. . . the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins. . . . ‘I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins.’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1393).

“Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must ‘make satisfaction for’ or ‘expiate’ his sins. This satisfaction is called ‘penance.’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1459).

“The Church, who through the bishop and his priests forgives sins in the name of Jesus Christ and determines the manner of satisfaction. . .” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1448).

“. . . every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in a state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the ‘temporal punishment’ of sin.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1472).

“All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1030).

“. . . those who are expiating their sins in purgatory . . .” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1475).

“‘An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.’

‘An indulgence is partial or plenary [complete] according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.’ Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1471).

As you can see, the Catholic Church believes a salvation by Christ and good works with the final cleansing completed in Purgatory. But this is contrary to what the Bible teaches, this is another Gospel. You see, grace is unmerited favor that has been extended to us through Christ. It is not something we deserve or ever will deserve. And if we had to work for our salvation in any way, then God would be a debtor to us, it would not be grace, He would owe us salvation! Christianity is far different in that it teaches that God reaches down to man to save him from his sin because man can’t save himself!

Paul, in writing to the churches in Galatia was coming against the Judaizers that would come in after Paul taught and would say that Paul was right, you do need Jesus, but you also need to keep the Law of Moses, you have to be circumcised. In other words, it was a salvation in Jesus and good works and Paul hits this false gospel hard as he tells us, **“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”** Galatians 1:6-9.

Again, when you add anything to grace you do not make it better; in fact you only destroy it, it is no longer grace, it is works! Paul tells us in Romans 11:6, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“But if it is by grace (His unmerited favor and graciousness), it is no longer conditioned on works or anything men have done. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace [it would be meaningless].”** That is very clear and yet, the Catholic Church places tradition above the Word of God and thus, men have come up with this idea of salvation, which is a false Gospel!

John MacArthur gives us some insight on these destructive, these dangerous teachings. He tells us, “The most destructive dangers to the church have never been atheism, pagan religions, or cults that openly deny Scripture, but rather supposedly Christian movements that accept so much biblical truth that their unscriptural doctrines seem relatively insignificant and harmless. But a single drop of poison in a large container can make all the water lethal. And a single false idea that in any way undercuts God’s grace poisons the whole system of belief.”

Now please understand that I am not picking on the Roman Catholic Church, I am only exposing the false doctrine and as you know, I offend a lot of people, including the Protestant Church and what they are getting into. And understand that as we look at what salvation is all about, you will clearly see why what the Roman Catholic Church is teaching a false Gospel that does not save people, but sends them to Hell, not Purgatory because there is no Purgatory. When Jesus cried out, “**Paid in full**” “**It is finished**” the work of salvation was completed by Him and not by anything we do. We only receive the free gift by faith in Jesus!

Now let’s look at what the Protestant Church is getting into because it is important for us to see what salvation is not and then we will see what the Scriptures tell us it is. And if you have not been offended yet, hang on, I still may offend you! Now also keep in mind that many of these unbiblical doctrines are coming out of the Emerging Church but not exclusively and it is reaching into many, many churches across America, denominational and non-denominational churches!

Listen to what Brian McLaren has to say in his book, *A Generous Orthodoxy* about who is saved. He writes, “This is how I feel when I’m offered a choice between the roads of exclusivism (only confessing Christians got to heaven), universalism (everyone goes to heaven) and inclusivism (Christians go to heaven, plus at least some others). Each road takes you somewhere, to a place with some advantages and disadvantages, but none of them is the road of my missional calling blessed in this life to be a blessing to everyone on earth.”

Tony Campolo, another Emergent Church leader wrote, “Going to heaven is like going to Philadelphia. . . . There are many ways. . . . It doesn’t make any difference how we go there. We all end up in the same place.” (Tony Campolo, *CarpeDiem: Seize the Day*, p.85).

Brian McLaren, also an Emergent Church leader wrote, “I don’t believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts . . .” (Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, p. 260).

Rob Bell, former pastor of Mars Hill Church and Emergent Church leader wrote, “What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry’s tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births? . . . Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live?” (Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* pp. 26-27).

Tony Jones wrote, “Some people today may find it compelling that some Great Cosmic Transaction took place on that day 1,980 years ago, that God’s wrath burned against his son instead of me. I find that version of atonement theory neither intellectually compelling, spiritually compelling, nor in keeping with the biblical narrative.” (Tony Jones, *Beliefnet.com* ‘Why Jesus Died’ 4/09).

Also, in 1995 Jim Wallis founded ‘Call to Renewal’ for the purposes of advocating for leftist economic agendas such as tax hikes and wealth redistribution to promote social justice. He himself stated, “That’s what the gospel is all about.” In 2005, Democratic Senators (including Harry Reid) met with Wallis to devise clever ways to use religious language to pull evangelical voters away from Republicans. According to *TraditionalValues.org*, Wallis was hired to fool Americans into believing secular liberals had found “religion” in part by sprinkling references to God and faith into their speeches. Just this year, Wallis has criticized America’s heritage, capitalism, conservative Christians, and jumped on the race card express saying, “would there even be a Tea Party if the president of the United States weren’t the first black man to occupy that office?”

Why in the world is there such an attack on the Gospel of Jesus? Why do we see people altering the Gospel? Why do we see people changing or adding to how we are saved? It is easy when you think about what the Gospel means to us. Paul puts it like this in Romans 1:16 **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

You see, when you change the Gospel, when you present a different Jesus, you are taking away the power of God to salvation to all who believe. In other words, you are presenting to them a false Gospel that makes them feel good about going to Hell and they don't even realize it. That is how dangerous this is and that is why we are going to spend some time looking at this issue of Soteriology or the study of salvation. And please, don't be afraid, it is not going to be in-depth in that we will spend years on this. But it is very important that we understand it and why we believe in it so that when the false Gospel's are presented, we can expose them and not fall prey to them!

There are three areas we will be looking at in this study on salvation and each one is important and each one builds upon the other. We will be looking at ***THE FALL OF MAN, THE SALVATION OF MAN, and THE RESULTS***. So let's begin this morning looking at this big problem, ***THE FALL OF MAN*** and see what the Lord has for us.

THE FALL OF MAN

Paul, in Romans chapter 5 lays out the problem for mankind, his fall you might say. In fact, when you think about it, it truly speaks of the ruin of mankind. Let's read what Paul had to say in Romans 5:12-14 and then I will expound on that. Paul tells us, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned - (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”**

Paul is telling us of a problem that we all have inherited and that problem is sin! You see, when God created Adam and Eve they were good, there was no sin in them. They fellowshiped with God, they had an intimate relationship with God. And God told Adam that everything in the Garden of Eden was for them except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to partake of that tree. In other words, God told them that they could partake of 99.9% of all the trees in the garden, but that one tree was off limits. So Satan's lie is only 0.1% you might say, he spoke 99.9% truth. Do you see how deceptive he is? Satan will flood you with truth to believe one lie!

Satan got Eve to doubt God's Word, that it was all truth. He added to the Word that God spoke. She not only doubted God's Word but she also doubted God's judgment, she did not believe that partaking of this fruit would lead to death like God had warned. And then she doubted God's love, she believed that God was holding something back from them by not allowing them to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! Do you see how deceptive Satan is and just as Eve bought those lies, many do today.

What do I mean by that? I mean that many today feel that they are good enough to get into Heaven. They feel that they are better than most people and thus, God must accept them into Heaven! And that is just a lie of the Devil because there are none who are good, no not one! You doubt that? Then you are just foolish.

"How can you say that Pastor Joe, you don't know me? You are a minister of God and you speak like that!" Okay, prove me wrong. Let me test you on this one. Have you ever lied before, even once? If you say "No!" I already have you in another lie! So you are a liar. Have you ever stolen anything before, even a paperclip or pencil, just one thing in your entire life? Of course you have and thus, you are a thief! Have you ever wanted something that someone else has, anything? Of course you have and thus, you are a coveter. One more and here it is. Have you ever looked upon a woman with lust in your heart men or for you ladies, looked at a man with lust in your heart? According to Jesus then you are an adulterer or a fornicator!

So let's see how good you really are? You have told me so far that you are a lying, thieving, coveting adulterer! So how good are you really? Not so good and that is the problem as Paul said, "**As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.'**" Romans 3:10-12.

And what sin does in our life is it breaks our fellowship with God just as we see in the Garden of Eden as God is calling out to Adam and both Adam and Eve are hiding themselves from God. You see, they understood that they could not stand before a holy and righteous God in their sinful condition. What did they do? They sewed fig leaves together and made the first leafi-jeans! Sorry, but what you will find in Genesis chapter 3 is God did not accept that religious effort by Adam and Eve, He ignored it, it was meaningless to Him. That was man trying to reach up to God by his good works and it was not accepted! What God did do is He killed an animal, I believe it was a lamb, and made a covering for them. That was the first time that they saw death, and it was all because of their sin. And as God looked at Adam and Eve He saw them covered by the blood, in a sense, of the sacrifice, atonement was made for their sin, the substitutionary sacrifice was made, the innocent for the guilty. It was not man reaching up to God by his good works, his effort, but God reached down to man to save him from his sin.

And thus, remember what Paul said in Romans chapter 5, “**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.**” Romans 5:12. In other words Paul is saying that sin has entered the human race through Adam and has been passed on to each person through Adam!

Folks, like it or not, we all inherit things from our parents. As you can tell, my parents were not giants, my mom is about 5 feet tall in high heels, my dad was a little shorter than me, and thus, now you know where I get my height from, or lack there-of! Also, awhile back I was looking at one of my dad’s High School pictures and to my shock, he looked just like me, or more correctly, I looked just like him! It could have been a picture of me; no one would know the difference except that the picture was old. I inherited some of his physical characteristics.

Now here’s the thing we need to understand. Not only do we inherit physical characteristics from our parents, but we also inherit spiritual ones from our ancestor, from Adam. Thus, from Adam on all of mankind, except for Jesus, He was virgin born, was infected by sin, no one can escape this! That is what Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:15, “**For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**” So Jesus was without sin but every person born into this world is born a sinner. Interestingly enough, in Hebrew, “Adam” means “mankind.” Thus, just as Adam sinned we are like him, we are sinners!

Now please understand that sinning doesn't make us sinners, we sin because we are sinners. It is like this, stealing horses doesn't make us horse thieves we steal horses because we are horse thieves! In other words it just shows us who we are – sinners! It is as Paul said in Romans 3:23, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**”

I do realize that this statement by Paul is hard to swallow for some. But you can't miss his point, the conclusion of what he is saying is very clear! All of us have sinned, every one of us is born with a sin nature and we show that every day of our lives. Think about a little baby, do you have to train up a baby, a child? Of course you do and if you don't, they will be out of control. Think about children. They are self-centered, it is all about them. They want what others have, they covet. They take things from others. In other words, they are born sinners because they as well as all of us are descendants of Adam!

Now, not only was there the physical separation from God because of sin but once sin entered this world through Adam the death process also began. The Lord said to Adam, “**but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**” Genesis 2:17. That can literally be translated, “. . . in the day that you eat of it dying you shall surely die.” In other words, spiritual death was immediate while physical death was now a process, the Second Law of Thermodynamics went into effect where things were wearing down, moving from order to disorder.

So we, as descendants of Adam, have all inherited a sin nature and our lives reflect that as we sin. That means mankind is in ruin, sin has separated us from God and the wages for sin is death, God's wrath will come upon us, we will be eternally separated from God. Obviously that is not good, but God is not going to leave man in that condition, He is going to step in and do something about it. You see, God did not want us to live eternally in these bodies of sin. That was not His plan.

Now let's put this into perspective for a minute. Sin is the precondition for salvation. That should just make sense. Do you really need salvation if there are no sinners in need of being saved? Of course not! Can you imagine swimming in a pool, having a great time and all of a sudden here is this personal flotation device that the lifeguard throws at you and before you know it the lifeguard is in the water pulling you out! The only problem is that you did not need to be saved, you were doing fine. So this was not necessary at all.

Now when it comes to salvation it is not that some don't need it, as we have already seen. All have sinned, all fall short of the glory of God, there are none who are good, there are none who are righteous. Thus, man, in a sense, is drowning in sin and he is going under. He can't save himself! And that is where God steps in and rescues us, saves us from our sin! And think about this. God is the author of our salvation. What role did we play in this plan? We are the ones where sin originated with. Salvation originated in Heaven while sin originated for humans on this earth! That is the problem and God is the solution!

Let me put this into perspective for you so you will see what has happened, where we stand. Some of you may be familiar with the medical condition called myasthenia gravis and if you are not familiar with this condition, I will explain what it means in a nut shell. And it is a very serious condition, a deadly condition. In this condition there is a problem with the muscles responding to the signals being sent to them by the brain. In a normal person, that is not someone with myasthenia gravis, the brain signals the muscles to contract by sending electrical impulses along the nerves to the muscles where they are received by a special apparatus known as the motor-end-plate. Now I don't want to be too technical, but this is what happens for our muscles to move. These motor-end-plates receive these signals and they pass it along to the muscle and the muscle moves, either contracting or extending.

The problem for people with myasthenia gravis is these end-plates are missing. And even though the brain is sending the signal, it is never received by the muscle. And because it is not received the muscle does not respond and it eventually shrivels up!

Apart from Christ our spirit is dead; we can't have communication with God. In a sense, those end-plates are missing and thus, even though God is speaking the signal does not get through; we don't hear God and thus, we don't respond to God! When Adam was created those end-plates were there and they functioned beautifully. But once Adam sinned, those end-plates were destroyed and that fellowship with God was broken! Yes, God is still speaking but the signal is not received. And this death of the spirit affects a person's life, what they do and what they say. And apart from God they become more and more depraved!

It is only when we come to Christ that our spirit is made alive again and that fellowship with God restored. Those end-plates have grown back and we can hear God speak to us! Paul makes that point in Ephesians chapter 2 as he tells us, “**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**” Ephesians 2:1-3.

Here we see Paul speaking of spiritual death, what we have just been talking about. And he is saying that when a person is spiritually dead they are insensitive to the things of God because their sins have separated them from God. Think of it like this. If you kicked a dead person, punched them, they would not feel it, they are insensitive to it because they are dead and the same is true in regards to our spirit. You see, that word “**trespasses**” or PARAPTOMA (par-ap’-to-mah) in the Greek speaks of going the wrong direction while “**sins**” or HAMARTIA (ham-ar-tee’-ah) in the Greek speaks of missing the mark and the mark is perfection. In archery it was the bull’s eye!

Thus, all are going in the wrong direction, all have missed the mark which means that all are spiritually dead to the things of God outside of Christ. They are like spiritual zombies walking around. And yes, you can dress them up, put a hat on their head; a cigar in their mouth but the fact of the matter is that dead is dead! Many, even in the church today, may look good outwardly, all dressed up, but they are spiritually dead, they are unable to feel or be sensitive to the things of God.

In Isaiah 59:1-2 we are told of this condition, **“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

And Paul tells us what kind of life these people who are spiritually dead live and please keep in mind that all of us were there at one time before we came to Christ. Thus, Paul tells us that outside of Christ people meander through life according to the course of this world or the world's system of values apart from God. And isn't that exactly what we see in the world today as people try to satisfy their fleshly desires. In fact the word **“desires”** implies that they are seeking after these things with great diligence, it is a willful act on their part and because of their sin the wrath of God will come upon their lives!

Now I do realize that many don't want to hear that they are sinners. They are afraid it might hurt their fragile self-esteem. In fact, in some churches today the word “sin” can't be spoken because it is too negative, it might offend someone and thus, they water sin down to make it more tasteful to the people, not so offensive to them. That is tragic and it is wrong.

“The late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman used to tell of a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. He minced no words, but defined sin as ‘That abominable thing that God hates.’ A leader in his congregation came to him on one occasion and urged him to cease using the ugly word. Said he, ‘Dr. Blank, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people, hearing you, will be more likely to indulge in sin. Call it something else, as “inhibition,” or “error,” or a “mistake,” or even a “twist of nature.”’”

‘I understand what you mean,’ the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. ‘This bottle’ he said, ‘contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads poison. Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that says, “Wintergreen?” The more harmless the name the more dangerous the dose will be.’”

Amen to that, it is time more would stand up and call sin what it is, *SIN!* And like I have said, if there were no sinners, why would we need a Savior, why would we need to be saved? We wouldn’t. And Jesus made this very point in Matthew 9:10-13 as we are told, **“Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”**

The point that Jesus is making here is very simple. Think of it like this. How many of you when you are 100% healthy, a Charles Atlas person, calls for his doctor for an emergency examination? It is hard to get people to go to the doctor when they are sick, let alone when they are healthy, that is impossible! The point being is these religious people saw themselves as healthy, in need of nothing, and thus, Jesus goes to those who are in need, those who see themselves sick in sin. Now, these religious leaders did not see themselves as sick, but they were dying in sin and yet refused to be healed by Jesus! And Jesus does not force Himself upon these religious leaders, but will wait for them to come to the end of themselves, when they realize they are sick in sin and need a Savior and He will save them!

You see, not only must a person need to see themselves as being poor in spirit, unable to do anything to be saved, but they must mourn over their sinful condition and come to that place where you will repent of your sins, you will receive Jesus! It is as Paul tells us in II Corinthians 7:10, **“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”** Not empty sorrow that does nothing in your life, but true sorrow that leads to repentance, a change in your life, turning towards God, and that leads to salvation! In other words you have come to the point where you are crying out for the Savior, you can't do it and you ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, to cleanse you of all your sins and He can and He will!

The bottom line is this. Because we are born in sin our spirit is dead to the things of God, we can't receive from Him. And because our spirit is dead the bodily appetites control our lives and the result is the depravity of man. That is the problem for every person apart from Christ today!

James Montgomery Boice puts this into perspective for us as he wrote, "Someone has said that we are sinners in God's sight in three ways. We are sinners by birth (we inherit sin and its guilt from Adam), by choice (we willingly recapitulate our forefathers' sin), and by divine verdict. It is by the law that the decree is passed against us. The law is God's standard before which we all fall short. Thus we are either condemned by it or are driven to the Savior." (James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, p. 119).

So we see the problem with man, he has inherited sin and he has acquired sin and thus, he deserves the judgment of God. God can't ignore it but the penalty for sin must be paid. Now I think you can understand why it is so important that the Gospel message goes forward and that we don't distort it or try to change it to make it say something else. We should not be ashamed of it for it is the power of God to salvation to anyone who believes. May we not forget that!

Let me share with you two important verses regarding this. In II Timothy 1:8-12 Paul tells Timothy, **“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”**

That Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our salvation is based upon His finished work on the cross of Calvary and Paul was commissioned by God to preach it, to be an apostle and to be a teacher to the Gentiles. To preach speaks of ministering to the lost, the unsaved and once they are saved they are then taught the things of God, built up in the faith. We truly need more teaching in churches today and less preaching, the sheep need to be built up in the faith! And Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, he had the authority of God in what he said, what he taught.

And keep in mind that Paul suffered tremendously as he brought the Good News, the Gospel to the lost. In fact, the Lord warned Ananias of what was ahead for Paul in the work God called him to do. We are told in Acts 9:15-16, **“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.’”**

Today, if someone looks at us the wrong way we feel we are being persecuted. Paul truly suffered persecution for his faith. He was thrown in prison, beat up, stoned, shipwrecked and yet, through it all he stayed strong, he stayed on course. How did he do it? He tells us that **“. . . I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”** Yes, it is important to know *WHAT* you believe but it is also important to know in *WHOM* you believe! Paul believed upon Jesus as His Lord and Savior and thus, he knew that He would be able to keep him safe, to protect him; He would be able to sustain his faith until he went to be with the Lord or the Lord returned for him and all believers living at that time in the Rapture – ***THAT DAY!***

You see, if you have that perspective, as you look to that day, if it is precious to you as it was to Paul, you will not be shaken, moved from the course that God has set for you! It is as Spurgeon said, “‘Know thyself,’ said the heathen philosopher; that is well, but that knowledge may only lead a man to hell. ‘Know Christ,’ says the Christian philosopher, ‘know him, and then you shall know yourself,’ and this shall certainly lead you to heaven, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus is saving knowledge.”

And a very sobering verse is found in Mark 8:38 where Jesus said, **“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”**

Those are very cutting words spoken by Jesus and the idea here is that there is no such thing as closet Christians, secret saints, or disguised disciples. It’s always been this way and it will always be this way. Look at some examples from the Bible.

- In Genesis we hear, **“Where are you?”** as God called to Adam. And keep in mind that it was not because God couldn’t find Adam. It was because He wanted Adam to come forward and admit his sin and his need to get right. God wants us to recognize our sin and acknowledge it before Him, first for salvation and then for fellowship. (See Genesis 3:9).
- In Exodus we hear, **“Who is on the Lord’s side?”** Moses asked the Israelites. And the only ones who would take a stand with Moses and obviously with the Lord were the sons of Levi as they made a public declaration even though it went against what the others in the camp were doing, who they were standing with. It is not always the popular thing to do, but it is the right thing to do! (See Exodus 32:26).
- In Joshua we hear, **“Who is on the Lord’s side?”** as Joshua asked the people, challenged the people to publically take a stand for the Lord. It didn’t matter what others might do or say, what you will do, who will you stand with! (See Joshua 24:15).
- And in I Kings we hear, **“How long will you halt between two opinions?”** as Elijah asked the children of Israel. He challenged them, “If Baal be god, serve him. But if Yahweh be God, serve Him.” Once again he called the people to make a public decision who they were going to serve! (See 1 Kings 18:21).

And think about this for a minute. Every man that Jesus called, He called publicly. There were no secret agent Christians back then and there are none today. He calls us publically to call out His name and serve Him so all may see because He alone is the way to the Father, there is salvation in no other name and we will deal with this more next time!

You know me, I like to keep you informed and thus, let me give to you this little public service announcement. There has been a recall and it is very serious and you need to pay attention because all of you have been affected by it. I will read to you the announcement that has gone out warning people of the danger that is out there and how to rectify the problem. Again, this is for all of you so pay attention.

NOTICE OF RECALL

The Maker of all human beings is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to the serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units that were code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units.

This defect has been technically termed, “Sub sequential Internal Non morality,” or more commonly known as *SIN*, as it is primarily expressed.

Some of the other symptoms are as follows:

- [a] Loss of direction
- [b] Foul vocal emissions
- [c] Amnesia of origin
- [d] Lack of peace and joy
- [e] Selfish, or violent behavior

[f] Depression or confusion in the mental component

[g] Fearfulness

[h] Idolatry

[i] Rebellion

The manufacturer, Who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this *SIN* defect.

The Repair Technician, Jesus, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee.

The number to call for repair in all areas is: ***P-R-A-Y-E-R***. Once connected, please upload your burden of *SIN* through the ***REPENTANCE*** procedure. Next, download ***ATONEMENT*** from the Repair Technician, Jesus, into the heart component. No matter how big or small the *SIN* defect is, Jesus will replace it with:

[a] Love

[b] Joy

[c] Peace

[d] Patience

[e] Kindness

[f] Goodness

[g] Faithfulness

[h] Gentleness

[i] Self-control

Please see the operating manual, the **HOLY BIBLE**, for further details on the use of these fixes. As an added upgrade, the Manufacturer has made available to all repaired units a facility enabling direct monitoring and assistance from a resident maintenance Technician, the **HOLY SPIRIT**.

Repaired units need only make Him welcome and He will take up permanent residence on the premises!

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction voids the Manufacturer's warranty, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded.

For free emergency service, call on **JESUS**.

DANGER: The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace.

The **SIN** defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven so as to prevent contamination of that facility. Thank you for your attention. Please assist where possible by notifying others of this important recall notice.

Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Jude 1:2.

- Source Unknown

Now if you have already rectified this problem of **SIN**, then you need to let others know of this recall notice, it is very important. It is a matter of life and death! If you haven't done this and you are not sure how to correct this error, please see me afterwards or call me or e-mail me and I will help you. I may not be computer smart, but I know how to fix this problem, Jesus has given me the instructions!

Remember what Paul said in Romans 5:12-14, this is the problem, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned - (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”**

That is the problem, the inherited sin from Adam and our own acquired sin and thus, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God, we cannot be saved and there is nothing we ourselves can do about it. We can't save ourselves, we can't do anything, any good works to save ourselves and it seems hopeless. But make no mistake about it; God does not leave us in this condition. He has provided a way out. The salvation of man is found through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and we touched on this already this morning, and next week we will cover it more in detail!

Donald Grey Barnhouse puts into perspective or us as he wrote,

Some time ago, while teaching a Bible class on the Book of Genesis, I came to the third chapter and the account of the fall of man. In the course of the study I said that many of the great differences in theology which divide men and churches arose out of the question as to how far man fell in the sin of Adam. To my astonishment, the crowd laughed. I was not expecting it at all, and had a flash of stunned silence, but then I immediately saw that the laughter came from a shock of something so unexpected. The audience had never heard the matter expressed in that way, and their minds were totally unprepared for the statement, and did not comprehend it. The combination had touched off laughter.

Yet in no small sense the statement is historically true and Scripturally revealing. One of the fundamental differences between the Catholic and the Reformed theologies is the question of the distance of the fall. Or, to put it in another way, of what is man capable at the present time? Rome would teach that man is quite capable of storing up merit by a system of good works. Every religion which believes that salvation is through human character holds that man has not fallen very far. Some think, indeed, that he has fallen upwards! . . .

It is a matter that is of great importance to all who carry on any kind of witness to unbelievers. I remember a preacher who once said in a private conversation that if he thought there was a spark of the divine left in fallen men, he would counsel [direct] putting electric fans in the pulpit to fan the spark to flame, rather than preachers to proclaim the miracle-working Gospel. Facetious? Perhaps, but there is a great deal of truth in his remark.

There can be no doubt that New Testament theology is based on the fact that man fell all the way. He fell so far that he could fall no farther. He fell so far that there was no life left in him. He is “dead” (Eph. 2:1), and must be “quickened” by the Spirit before he can have even the remotest semblance of faith, but even that must be the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them (1 Cor. 2:14); in fact there is no one that understandeth, not even anyone that seekth after God (Rom. 3:11).

The carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be; they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7). When we realize this, we will learn to rely less on anything that appeals merely to the natural man and his understanding. Instead we will send forth the Word with the knowledge that we are preaching to dead men, whom only the power of God can quicken. All praise will be to Him.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse, Timeless
Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching,
pp. 355-356

Let me leave you with these words from Paul, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**” Romans 1:16. May we never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is the power to save sinful man, you and me! Sin ruined man and Jesus came to save us, to restore us back and I am so thankful that God did not give up on me; He did not give up on us!