

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why We Need to Be Saved—The Commands

Selected Scriptures

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PowerPoint Presentation included: Two Commands.pptx

SermonAudio Blurb: To be a person who is in a right relationship toward his or her Creator is the most critical issue anyone faces. The common way this is described is whether a person is “saved” or not. Unfortunately this concept, though a central theme of the bible, is misunderstood by many, even within the church. What does it mean? What does it entail? Why is it so important? And how does one know if they are saved? These are the sort of questions this small series will seek to explain. We have seen that the problem is sin and that the solution is in and through Jesus Christ. Now, in this third sermon we will see the commands: repent and believe the gospel.

I. Introduction.

- A. Why do we need to be saved is the most important question. Many will say they are a Christian but they are not saved.
 - 1. We wanted to help the person who is sitting here thinking they are a Christian, but actually isn't a Christian, understand what this means.
 - 2. And, we want to help the Christian sitting here understand what you must explain and say to someone you are evangelizing.
- B. We broke this series into four sermons, dealing with four parts to the idea of being saved.
 - 1. First, the problem.
 - a. Sin (Original and Abiding—Gen 3 with Ephesians 2)
 - b. Wrath of God (Romans 1:18ff and Romans 2, storing up wrath for the day of wrath)
 - 2. Second, the solution.
 - a. The active obedience of Jesus Christ.
 - b. The substitutionary atonement.
 - c. The death-defeating resurrection.
 - 3. Third, the commands.
 - 4. Four, the benefits.

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C. Today we consider the commands.

1. In other words, what are we commanded to do in light of the problem and the solution?
2. There are two commands given to anyone who hears the problem and solution. These two commands are really two sides of the same coin and by understanding them you discover what is the entrance way to salvation.
 - a. Now remember, the bible says you are in rebellion to your Creator. You are guilty of sin. You are under judgment for this sin. And the judgment is an eternity of God's wrath. As the bible says, "The soul that sins must die."
 - b. But God, rich in mercy, has given us His Son, God in human flesh, to be our perfect sacrifice for sin. He is our substitute who takes the place of those for whom He died. He drinks the fulness of our wrath. He becomes sin that we might become righteous in Him. He defeats both the sin and its power, which is death through His resurrection on the third day after He died.
 - c. There it is in a nutshell. Now the question is, what do you do with it?

D. The bible gives us two commands in light of what God says about us and our universal guilt before Him and God's solution through Jesus Christ—repent and believe. Today I intend to show you what these terms mean and what they promise to the one who does them.

II. We believe the problem and solution.

- A. The bible makes this simple statement from a prophet who was preparing the nation of Israel to see their Savior. *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* (Mark 1:15) (slide 1)
1. The whole of the bible up to that point was pointing, promising, and preparing for the One who would come to rescue/save/deliver God's people from sin and death. "Fulfilled" = it has come.
 2. The Kingdom of God is a shorthand way of saying that the prophets of Israel had told of the true, eternal King who would come and establish God's perfect rule upon this earth. That all the nations would come to Jerusalem and worship. And that God would reign.
 3. This is the gospel, which is the good news.
 4. So what must the people do? Two things: **"Repent and believe"**

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5. And what is the content/focus of repenting and believing? “In” the gospel.
 6. So we will break this sermon down to two simple points: In light of the problem of mankind’s universal sinfulness and guilt before its Creator **and** because of God’s perfect provision of forgiveness and salvation from judgment and death **through** the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, **what** is to be our response? Repent and Believe.
- B. The command to repent.
1. Let us first consider for a moment what has happened to a man or woman who suddenly says that they believe the Christian gospel? In other words, they believe what Grayson taught two weeks ago.
 - a. We would say that something has changed. And this is quite common for people. One day they are minding their business and the next day these things about themselves and Jesus Christ become very, very important to them.
 - b. For some this is rather abrupt while for others it is a process where slowly things change until, at some point, they realize they actually believe what the bible says about themselves and about Jesus. Not just saying they believe...they actually, truly, wonderfully believe.
 2. What happened? We can say they believe or that they are now believers. But why? And the answer is that they had a change of mind.
 - a. At one point they heard the Christian message, the gospel but it meant nothing or it was a point of passing interest.
 - b. But then there was a critical change where the gospel was precious to them. They truly believed it.
 3. This is what is meant by “repent.”
 - a. The term literally means a change of mind.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (p 159) gives the sense of what is meant.
 - (1) People cannot continue believing one thing if they have truly had a change of mind about it.
 - (2) Note the report that Paul heard from others after he was there in the city preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Turned to God. Turned from idols.
 - i) We are worshipers by nature. All of you.

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- ii) What you worship may be different from others, but you all find your hope, your joy and your purpose in one or more things.
- iii) The bible says that God's wrath is upon each of us because we worship something, anything but the One who made us.
- iv) And these people turned from that way of thinking and worshiping to turn to God.
- (b) For what purpose? Was this a vague turning? An emotional, passing repentance? No, look down at it and find the purpose . . . "to serve."
 - i) This is describing the fruit of repentance.
 - ii) Anyone can say they repent. They can say they have changed their minds. **But the proof is seen in what or Whom they serve.**
 - iii) Watch any person for a time and you will see what or who they worship. Always and ever this will become evident.
- (c) However, note that it was not a vague sort of turning either. There was a clear indication of what changed in their minds.
 - i) How clear? So much that Christians in other cities and regions heard what was going on. This is pre-internet, pre-anything. This was a big deal, so much so that those who were traveling kept this in the front of their minds.
 - ii) True God.
 - a) The bible makes this abundantly clear. And therefore so must all who speak about the gospel.
 - b) There is only one God. The God of the bible who shares His glory with no others.

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- c) We are not asking a person to add God into their life like another little addition to his collection of beliefs.
 - d) We are calling people to reject all other gods, however they are called, and to follow and serve Him alone. Why? Because the one who has repented is the one who sees the God of the bible as the true God.
- iii) Living God.
 - a) The bible often mocks those who worship idols.
 - 1) It speaks of them cutting down a tree and a craftsman shaping it into some god. They decorate it with gold and silver and offer it food and treasures.
 - 2) But it cannot eat. It does not move. It merely sits there mute and worthless, for it is not alive.
 - b) (Slide 2) (Paul and Barnabas being called gods where they were at) Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, proclaiming the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. (Acts 14:15)
- iv) The return of Jesus Christ.
 - a) Here we see greater detail of what the apostle Paul was preaching to these people.

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- b) The message was about God's Son—Jesus Christ. That He was to return to us and that those who believe this were to wait and hope and look for that day.
- c) The bible tells us that when He returns two things will ultimately occur. Those who believe in Him will be saved from judgment. And those who have not believed, shall be judged and found guilty.
- d) Why? Because to reject what is true about God is to put yourself under His judgment.
- v) The resurrection, and therefore the death, of Jesus Christ.
 - a) To believe that Jesus rose from the dead requires that you understand that He died.
 - b) (Explain His substitutionary death).
 - c) The resurrection shows that His Father accepted His sacrifice in death. It showed He was true in that He promised both that He would die and rise again.
 - d) And if these things are true and happened, then His promise to return again is true as well.
- vi) The reality that it is in Jesus where you find salvation from God's judgment.
 - a) To the one who repents, there is salvation.
 - b) To the one who rejects this, God's judgment is the end result. This judgment is described as eternal death and eternal separation from

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God and life and is often referred to as hell.

c) And here is where we again see how repentance, a true change of mind, works.

1) The unrepentant person is one who may acknowledge hell, judgment and wrath of God.

2) But it is always for someone else or it is only a possibility, but that person is pretty sure they will escape.

3) Or it is more like the drug addicts who openly admit that the heroin is going to kill them. But then they shrug and shoot more into their veins. The short term pleasure is more important.

d) The one who repents is one who is **convinced** of the coming judgment and is **convinced** that he will be the one judged and found guilty and he is **convinced** that salvation from that wrath and judgment is found only in and through Jesus Christ.

4. So this is the idea of repenting. A radical change of mind about yourself and God. A change that results in your life radically moving in a new direction as well.

5. But why did you repent? It is because you obeyed the other command I mentioned at the beginning. You believed the good news. So let me explain the idea of “believing.”

C. The command to believe.

1. Hebrews 11:1-2, 6. (175)

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- a. Repentance and belief are so tightly connected that it is hard to separate them. Truly they are simply two sides of the same coin. Belief is the verb of the word “faith.” To say you believe means that there is some content upon which you have faith.
 - b. To believe is to be assured, which speaks of having a foundation upon which you stand. It is not a wish or a wispy hope, it is a settled conviction that it is true.
 - c. It is how we must approach God, believing what He has revealed, establishing our life and hope on it as the foundation of all that is true.
 - d. Notice in vs 6 that to not have faith means you cannot and will not be accepted by God. You come to Him but you do not believe what He has said and yet you expect Him to accept you. It is a lie you tell yourself.
 - (1) To believe is to draw near to Him.
 - (2) But that means you must believe He is and that means you must believe He is as He reveals Himself in the Word, not your personal creation of some god in your own imagination.
 - (3) And you must believe He will do what He promised. And this is what I will focus on for the remainder of this sermon.
2. Ask yourself right now if you believe you are a Christian. And if so, why?
 - a. Usually the response will be that you “believe.” Sometimes this is said in a bit more detailed manner such as you believe the gospel or that you believe that Jesus died for your sin and rose again on the third day. But at the core it is that you believe.
 - b. And often what is missing is a simple, clear understanding of what it means to have what I am calling “saving faith.” Or to say it another way, “What does it look like to believe unto salvation?”
 3. We all believe something. But that is not saving faith. There are many who believe the right things about themselves and about Jesus Christ but that is not saving faith. So let me work out with you the three aspects that are necessary to have saving faith. (Slide 3)
 - a. Know the right facts. Agree to those facts. Trust in the God who declared these to be the facts.

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- b. The reality is that often one of these points is missing and as a result the person is never saved. But what makes this even more sad is that they are often thinking they are saved.
- 4. First, you must know the gospel.
 - a. This is critical and yet it is often downplayed.
 - b. For decades the Church has played a minimalization game on what is the good news that saves us.
 - c. For too many it is simply that God loves you and wants to have you with Him in heaven. Or that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but no idea what that actually means.
 - d. It is a series of facts that have no real meaning behind them. They sound true but they are hollow when examined. They are like those chocolate Easter bunnies that are hollow on the inside.
 - e. Explain the facts: Sin, inability to help save, substitution, redemption from slavery, physical resurrection, coming again.
- 5. Second, you agree to these facts.
 - a. This is simply an embracing of what the bible says to be true. You are not fighting them. You agree that they are what is said in the bible.
 - b. This is often where people stop. Very common in Lutheran and Presbyterian churches to have a confirmation class and event. You are instructed in the gospel and then asked to affirm what you were taught.
 - c. Many people growing up in other churches who don't do confirmation say they are saved because they say that they believe the gospel and are not arguing about what the gospel says, even though often it is vague.
 - d. But this is still not what saving faith looks like. Many know the gospel and agree with it yet nothing in their life exhibits that faith. The bible says that we cannot hide what we believe. It always shows by what you do and do not do. Yet how many claim to be a Christian and yet their life is one marked by rebellion to the very Lord they claim to believe in?
- 6. You must trust in the God who declared these to be the facts.

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- a. This is what we saw in Hebrews 11. We believe God exists AND we believe He rewards those who seek Him.
- b. There is a settled assurance that we are sinners who desperately need salvation and forgiveness. There is a true conviction of this fact.
- c. A settled awareness that we cannot help in this salvation. We contribute nothing but our own sin to it.
- d. A settled awareness that God alone can save us from damnation that we most certainly deserve.
- e. A settled awareness that even your faith is not what saves you. Rather it is in what and Whom you place your faith that saves you.
- f. A settled awareness that only through who Jesus is and what Jesus did can you be saved. His death and resurrection is enough. That life and forgiveness comes through Him alone.
- g. A settled awareness that if the gospel is true then nothing else is greater and nothing else can share the stage with Jesus Christ. He is our hope and joy and purpose from the beginning to the end.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Many a person raised in the church, members of a church, who claim to be a Christian, who know the facts of the gospel, agree with those facts, but have no trust in the good news of Jesus Christ.
- B. For some, they hear the gospel and suddenly they find that they believe. It is like a light bulb clicking on in a dark room.
- C. For many it is more like a dimmer switch that grows ever brighter. And finally there is a point where the person realizes that something is different and upon thought they see that what is different is that they are now resting and trusting in the gospel. It is their life and hope.
- D. This is what you must understand. If you are a Christian you must give the gospel as it is described in the bible. All of it. You must explain what the bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: (Slide 4)
- E. You must speak this until they either reject it or they accept it. From that point your work is done.
- F. The only thing left is to call them to trust in it. To trust that Jesus is truly the only way to be saved—through His life, death and resurrection.

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G. And this is what I say to you here. Do you believe this? Is this your hope and your only hope?

H. Next week we will see the blessings that come from being saved.

Benediction

May our God cause you all to not stumble and to make you stand one day in His presence filled with joy. May God's Spirit hold you in His mighty hand until that day of redemption. And may you find your hope, joy and life in His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. To Him be the glory and majesty and dominion for all time. Amen