Doctrine

Salvation

Fairview Missionary Church| Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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November 01, 2026

I want to begin today by asking the question: What do you believe? What do you believe about God? What do you believe about life? What do you believe about humanity, about death, about the world? These are questions that are extremely important to be able to answer, not just for yourself, but also for anyone else who may ask you those questions. Someone may ask you those questions in life because they're genuinely seeking the truth.

They genuinely want to know the answer, or they just may want to know what you personally believe. Now, I don't know about you, but I would love to sit down and talk with people of various faiths and truly ask them these questions. Whether it be Hindu, Islam, Buddhist, Mormons, and just be able to ask these questions and get straightforward and honest answers. What do you truly believe, and why do you believe that?

These are important questions because they directly shape our worldview and how we choose to live. How we answer these questions is how we determine what is important to us in life. And that is why we have been doing this series that we have been calling "Doctrine" over the past few weeks. We are answering some of the deep questions about our faith in Christianity as "What do you believe?" So far we've talked about the Trinity, God being three in one.

We spent some time talking about the Bible and where it came from and why we believe it. We spent time talking about humanity. And this week we are going to talk about one of the core doctrines of our faith, what truly is the most important part, and that is salvation. When you hear the word" salvation," what do you think about? Now, if you were raised in the church or going to the church, you might think about things like, "Well, I'm going to go to heaven when I die ." That's what salvation is.

Or, "I asked Jesus into my heart," right? That's what some people say, salvation. Or, "My sins are forgiven." Now, all of those things are true, but I need you to know that salvation is actually much bigger than any one of those statements. The Bible uses the idea of salvation to describe the idea of being rescued. Being rescued. If you are saved, it means you are rescued. And to save somebody means that you are rescuing them from some type of danger.

If someone is drowning, then you rescue them from the water. If someone is trapped in a burning building, then you are saving them or rescuing them from the fire. If someone is imprisoned, you are saving them from captivity. If someone is an Ohio State fan, then you are saving them from humiliation. Sorry. Misery loves company, all right? As a Michigan fan, all right, we can just relate today. Okay.

But the greatest danger that is facing humanity today is not a physical danger. It's not something like drowning or being caught in a burning fire or any of those things. The greatest danger that you and I face today is this idea of sin. The greatest rescue that God offers isn't merely a rescue from difficult circumstances or life situations. The rescue that He is giving us is a rescue from sin.

It's a rescue from death, from judgment, and from separation from Himself. Paul told the Philippian jailor, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." So I want to help answer five questions about salvation today. The first one being, why do we need salvation? Why do we need to be rescued? The second question then, logically, is who provides that salvation? The third question is, what did Jesus do to accomplish that salvation?

How did salvation come about? And then the fourth question is, how do we receive this salvation? And then finally, I want to wrap up by saying, what does salvation produce in our lives? What is the result of being saved through Jesus? I'm going to pray, and then as we've done in every week of this series, I'm going to read the missionary church's statement on salvation. And again, this week it's a little longer than it has been, with a lot of big words, and that's why we're going to spend the rest of the time unpacking that statement.

And that statement does answer all five of these questions. So let me pray, and then I will read that. Heavenly Father, we come before You today and thank You for Your Word, which I believe clearly lays out this whole idea of salvation, of being rescued from sin. And so we thank You that it is clear to us. And so my prayer for us today is that our minds would be cleared, our hearts would be cleared, and, Father, that we would allow Your Spirit to speak to us.

And as we talk about this idea of salvation, it wouldn't just be for the head knowledge so that we could answer somebody's question, but so that truly, as we ask these questions of ourselves and of our own lives, we know the answers that we will give. Have we received this salvation that comes through Jesus Christ? That is the most important question that any person will answer in their entire lives.

So guide us this morning. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's begin by the missionary church's statement on salvation. And this is very good. I love this entire statement. Here we go. "We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our salvation. He voluntarily offered Himself as our representative and substitute, and suffered and died on the cross in our place, taking upon Himself God's righteous wrath.

We also believe in His bodily resurrection on the third day, which powerfully declared Him to be the Son of God. By His death and resurrection, Jesus once for all conquered sin, death, hell, and the devil. We believe that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Salvation is a divine gift that is given to any who would repent and believe.

Repentance and faith are the divinely enabled human responses to the grace of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, a sinner must turn away from sin and embrace God, thus appropriating the benefits of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Therefore, all who truly believe and receive Christ are fully justified, reconciled to God, born of His Spirit, adopted as His children, and united with Jesus in His death and resurrection. They will then one day see Him in His glory and be glorified themselves as God brings His redemptive work to completion.

We believe that God intends to transform His redeemed people by conforming them to the image of His Son through the infilling and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Though this work begins with God's gracious initiative and can only be accomplished by His life - giving power, believers, our part, must cooperate and fully yield themselves to the Lordship of Christ.

Believers are called to decisively surrender their wills, be renewed in their minds, and have their hearts purified as they continuously offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. We believe that a living faith must express itself in a genuine life of loving obedience to God as well as in loving service to others.

Genuine faith will inevitably produce good works, which are born out of gratitude for salvation and are ultimately done for God's glory. Christians are called to live by the power of the Holy Spirit as citizens of the kingdom, serving as God's agents of transformation for society, for culture, and for the created world. There's a lot in there, isn't there? That is scripture.

That is the New Testament summarized, what is salvation. But in order to understand salvation and why we need salvation, we first need to understand the problem, and the problem is sin. Why do we need salvation? We need salvation because of sin. The Bible begins with humanity, Adam and Eve, living in perfect fellowship with God. Adam and Eve were created to know God and to love God, to worship Him, and to represent Him in all of creation.

Remember, Adam and Eve were created imago Dei, in the image of God. They were to represent Him to all creation. But as you read the story, we only make it through Genesis 1 and 2. We get to Genesis 3, and humans have already messed things up, right? We only make it through two chapters because humanity rebels. Genesis 3 tells us the story of how sin entered into God's perfect creation, and sin did a terrible thing.

The worst thing that sin did was separate humanity from God. Isaiah says this in chapter 59, verse 2, "But your iniquities, your sins, have separated you from your God ." And again, Romans 3:23, Paul says, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God ." And I need you to notice a very specific word that Paul uses in Romans 3:23. He says, "All." All.

Meaning salvation isn't only for the really bad people. Salvation isn't for only those people that have only messed up a little bit. Every single one of us needs salvation. Why? Because sin isn't simply what we have done. The problem is what sin has done to us. And we're all born into that. Sin produces guilt. Sin produces separation. Sin produces a spiritual death.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin, the cost of sin, is death ." Therefore, you and I don't simply need a little improvement. We don't need God to give us a little advice. You and I don't need to become just slightly better versions of ourselves. We absolutely need rescued. We need rescued. And here is the biggest problem. This is the problem of mankind. We need rescued, and we can't rescue ourselves.

Scripture is very clear. You can't be good enough. You can't erase your sin. You can't work hard enough to earn God's forgiveness. You can't attend church on enough Sundays or Wednesdays or Saturdays. You can't give enough money. You can't serve enough people. You and I cannot clean ourselves up enough to make us righteous before a holy God.

Ephesians 2: 8 - 9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, not by works ." Not by works, not by anything you can do. Salvation begins when you and I recognize, "I need to be rescued." Why do we need salvation? Because of sin. Because we need to be rescued, and we cannot rescue ourselves. So the next logical question then is, who provides this salvation?

If we all need it, then who provides it? And for this, we have a very simple answer. Salvation begins with God. Salvation begins with God as He provides what you and I could never provide for ourselves. Understanding that the whole idea of salvation was God's idea. It was God's plan. It was God's initiative, and it was fulfilled by God's grace. John 3:16, we all know this verse, don't we?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son." It was something that only God could give. God didn't look down on humanity and say, "Wow, they've made a mess of things. I guess I'm going to have to figure something out ." No. His plan for redemption, His plan to rescue us, wasn't an emergency response. God knew before He created anything that humanity would fall.

From the very beginning of scripture, God began to reveal this plan of how He was going to rescue us. Right away in Genesis 3:15, God gives us this first glimpse of a coming Savior. You can look up that verse later. Genesis 3:15. We're right in the midst of the fall, and we already see God's plan. Throughout the entire Old Testament, God continues to make promises to His people. He gives a promise of a descendant to Abraham, that the Israelites would become this nation, that God would reveal Himself to the world.

We have the promise of a king from David's line. We have the promise of a suffering servant in Isaiah 53: 5, where Isaiah says, "But He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities ." Who was Isaiah talking about? Who is that person that would be crushed? Jesus. Centuries before Jesus would enter into the creation, Isaiah is already prophesying about what is going to happen.

And so we move into that time, that fullness of time when Jesus comes. And we need to recognize that scripture doesn't teach that Jesus was simply one option among many, that there are many options to be rescued. That's not what it teaches. Jesus wasn't merely a great religious teacher. Jesus wasn't simply a person who could point us toward God. Jesus is God's provision for our salvation. He is the necessity for our salvation.

Luke says in Acts 4:12, "Salvation is found in no one else." He doesn't say in a few people or in, "I can count on my hand how many people that could do that ." No. It is through Jesus. 1 Timothy 2: 5, Paul says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the Christ Jesus." Jesus is our only mediator. He is the one who stands between sinful humanity and a holy God.

Why do we need salvation? Because of sin. Who provides for salvation? It is only through Jesus. So the third question is, what did Jesus do to accomplish our salvation? How did He provide salvation for us? Scripture is very clear, and this is the heart of the gospel. Jesus didn't simply come to teach us how to live. Jesus came to save us.

He accomplished salvation through His life, through His death, through His resurrection, through His ascension, and also through His promised return. Jesus lives for us. Scripture says that Jesus came, and He was tempted in every way, just as you and I are. He was tempted in every way, yet He did not sin. And that is crucial for Jesus to be able to be that way of salvation.

He had to be perfect. When we go back to the Old Testament, just as we talked about with communion, they had to offer a lamb or a goat or a bull, and it had to be perfect, without defect. That was the only way that that animal could carry the sin. So when Jesus came, if He was going to be that once - for - all sacrifice, He had to be perfect, without sin, in order to fulfill God's law.

He had to be completely obedient to the Father in order to die for us, and recognizing that He voluntarily took our place on the cross, He became our substitute. 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul says, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God ." There was a huge exchange that took place on the cross.

This is what Jesus has done for us. He took on all of our garbage, and we received all of His blessing. Think about this. We traded our sins for His righteousness. We traded our guilt for His forgiveness. We traded our condemnation - we should have been condemned - for His justification. And we'll talk about that word in a little bit, meaning it's just as if I never did any of those bad things. We traded our separation from God for reconciliation to God.

We traded our slavery to sin for freedom from sin. Jesus took what belonged to us so that we could receive what belonged to Him. It was a trade. Romans 5: 8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us ." The amazing truth that God didn't wait for us to get our act together before He sent Jesus. He didn't wait until we became worthy.

He loved us when we were unworthy. And so Jesus bore our judgment that our sin deserved. And that is what makes the cross so powerful, because the cross demonstrates two things at the same time. It demonstrates both the justice of God and the love of God. God is perfectly just. Somebody had to pay the price for those sins. And so God says, "A price has to be paid. I can't go around myself.

So I'm going to send Jesus, and I'm going to show my love in its perfection ." You see, sin matters, justice matters, holiness matters. But instead of requiring us to bear the judgment ourselves, God provided His Son.

And so Jesus became our substitute. And then that wasn't the end of the story. Then He rose from the dead. You see, the resurrection is essential to our salvation. Jesus didn't remain in the grave.

On the third day, we believe that He rose bodily from the dead, and that resurrection declares that Jesus is the Son of God. That is the proof. It demonstrates that sin and even death and the grave have been defeated, that Jesus has conquered those things. The cross says the price has been paid, but the resurrection says the victory has been won. The victory has been won. Jesus conquered, as we said, sin, death, the grave, and the devil.

And because Jesus lives today, salvation is more than just forgiveness of our past. It is the beginning of a new life. So that's what Jesus did, to bring salvation. So now the next question is, how do we receive this salvation, this gift that is being offered to all mankind? How do we receive this salvation? The quick and easy answer is by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2: 8 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith ." Grace, meaning we don't earn our salvation, and faith, meaning that we receive and we trust what God has done for us through Christ. And this faith is more than simply agreeing that Jesus existed. It's more than just saying in your mind," Yep, as we look through history, there was a man named Jesus who existed." It is more than that. Saving faith involves trusting Jesus.

And Scripture connects this idea of faith with repentance. Jesus said, "Repent and believe the good news." So what does this idea of repentance mean? It literally means to turn. It means to change direction. It means turning away from sin and turning towards God. Imagine you're walking on a road in one direction, and you suddenly realize you're going the wrong way. Repentance isn't simply saying to those around you, "Oh, I'm sorry.

I'm going the wrong way," and then continue to walk in the wrong direction. Repentance is actually turning around and getting back on track. And that is what happens when we come to Christ. We are acknowledging the truth that I am a sinner. I can't save myself. I need Jesus. And so I'm going to do my best through the power of the Spirit to turn from my sin, place my faith in Christ, and surrender to Him.

Romans 10: 9 says, "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." That's how you receive salvation. It is simply by receiving the gift. It is a gift, but you have to receive it. You have to accept it. If you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord, now I know this means more than just saying it. It's more than just mouthing the words.

When you say somebody is your Lord, the best analogy that I've ever heard about this is like driving a car. If I say somebody is my Lord, it means I get out of the driver's seat and they get in, right? They're in control of my entire life now. So when I say Jesus is Lord, it is an act of surrender. It's an act of me saying," You know what? Even though I might want to do A, B, and C, God, you want me to do this over here, I'm just going to not do that. I'm going to allow You to be my Lord ." That's what it means to receive salvation.

It is a gift that He gives us, but we must receive it. The final question, what happens then when we are saved? When we receive this salvation, what happens to us? Scripture says that there is a transformation. When someone genuinely comes to Christ, God does not simply say, "Okay, good job. You're forgiven. Try harder." Aren't you glad that's not the answer? Just try harder? We can't. The Bible says that God begins transforming the person.

We are transformed into a new creation. And here are some of the words that Scripture uses to define that transformation. They use the word justified, which means that you and I are now declared righteous because of what God has done. We are no longer condemned. And an easy way to remember this, as I said earlier, when you are justified before God, it is just as if I never sinned.

We get to take that magic eraser to our past and erase everything that we've done. That's how God views us. We are justified. Scripture says we are forgiven. Our debt has been paid. We had a bill that we could never pay

in a million lifetimes, and God sent Jesus so that He could pay that bill. Scripture says that we are reconciled, meaning that our relationship with God is restored. It was broken because of sin, but now we are reconciled back with God. We are brought near. Even more than that, Scripture says we are adopted.

God doesn't simply remove our guilt. He brings us into His family. We become the sons and daughters of the King. We are adopted into His family. Scripture says that we are born again. We are born of the Spirit. We receive new life. Scripture says that we are united with Christ. Our identity changes. We now belong to Jesus. I am His. His death becomes the foundation for my freedom.

His resurrection becomes the source of my new life and my hope. That if Jesus can be raised from the dead, so can I. You see, salvation changes everything about how we live. Salvation isn't just about where you go when you die. Salvation changes how you live when you're alive. It changes now.

Titus 2:11 - 12 says, "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people, and it teaches us, those who have been saved, to say no to ungodliness and to worldly passions, and to live self - controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age." God's grace doesn't give us permission to keep living however we want.

Grace teaches us to live differently, and we are transformed so that through the power of the Spirit, we begin to view the world differently, and we have the power to live differently so that we can truly be living in the image of God. You see, God doesn't just want to get us into heaven. He wants heaven's life to begin changing us here. It begins now. Salvation changes us. It produces things in us. It produces obedience. It produces holiness.

It produces love and sacrifice and good works. And please hear me. I know I've said it a hundred times. It isn't because we're trying to earn our salvation that we do these good works, but because we have already received salvation that we do the good works. It's a natural overflowing of what God has done in us. One comes before the other, salvation and then good works, not good works and then salvation. And so we believe, based on Scripture, that one day Jesus will return.

We believe that one day death will be finally defeated. We believe one day sin will be gone. One day creation will be fully restored to what God originally created to be. And there will be no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. So what is salvation? If someone were to ask you that question, let me just give you a simple one-sentence response. Salvation is God rescuing sinful people through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross.

That is what salvation is. It begins with the problem. We are sinners separated from God. The solution is Jesus Christ. The price was the death of God's Son, and the victory is seen through the resurrection of Jesus. And so our response should be repentance and faith. What is the result of that repentance and faith? It is forgiveness. It is justification. It is reconciliation. It is adoption. It is new life. It is transformation.

But maybe the most important question isn't, what is salvation? Maybe the most important question today is, have I received it? Did you know that it's possible to know all about salvation and still not be saved? I could stand up here and share everything that I have this morning with as much passion as I could share and with as much energy as I have, I could know all of this frontwards and backwards and still not be saved. You can understand doctrine. You can know the Bible verses.

You can go to church. You can sing all of the songs. You can know all of the right answers. But salvation isn't merely knowing about Jesus. Salvation is knowing Jesus. And there's a big difference. Salvation is turning from sin. It is putting your trust in Jesus. It is surrendering to His Lordship. "Jesus, I proclaim You as my Lord ." And it is receiving the gift.

And so Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God ." This is the invitation of the gospel, of the good news of Jesus Christ. He is saying to every single one of us, "Come home.

Come home. Come out of the darkness. Come out of the guilt. Come out of the condemnation. Come out of the slavery to sin and come to Christ ." He wants you and I to simply respond," Yes, Jesus, I believe.

I repent. I surrender, and I receive what You have done for me." That is how we receive salvation. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, it is my desire in my heart this morning that this would not simply be a head knowledge so that we can answer all of the right questions and logically walk somebody else through Your plan of salvation.

But it is my desire that every person here would truly ask those questions. What do they believe? What do they believe about life and about You and about death? Have they received this salvation that comes through Jesus Christ? And Father, for anyone here that is still wrestling with that question, I pray that Your Spirit would speak truth to them, that they would sense Your presence and Your peace, and that they would surrender to You, proclaiming Jesus as their Lord.

We ask this in His name. Amen.