

“Savior”

Summary

This powerful teaching invites us into a deeper understanding of Jesus as our Savior while simultaneously revealing our calling as 'small-s saviors' in a broken world. Drawing from Mark 4:41 where the disciples ask 'What manner of man is this?' we're challenged to move beyond religious comfort into active participation in God's saving work. The central paradox explored here is profound: Jesus, the only one who could have saved Himself, chose not to—modeling complete dependence on the Father even unto death. He tasted death for every person, experiencing the full weight of our sin's consequences so He could legitimately say 'I understand.' This message confronts our tendency toward self-salvation—our 401k plans, our self-help strategies, our religious activities—and calls us to 'work out' our own salvation efforts so God can 'work in' His. The elevator illustration powerfully demonstrates this: we've all been stuck, desperately ringing for help, and once rescued, we're called to get up from our comfortable spiritual recliners and help others who are stuck in the same place. Obadiah's prophecy of saviors arising on Mount Zion isn't about us becoming the source of salvation, but about becoming vessels so emptied of self-reliance that God's saving power flows unhindered through us. The world doesn't need to see us having it all together; they need to see us fully dependent on Jesus, modeling the same trust He demonstrated toward the Father.

Small Group Study Guide – Savior

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to help you see Jesus more clearly and to work out any self-salvation plans so His salvation can work in you.

Icebreaker Question

Share a time when you were "stuck" (literally or figuratively) and needed someone to rescue you. How did it feel to be helpless?

Key Takeaways

1. **Jesus is THE Savior** - His very name (Yeshua) means "Yahweh saves"

2. **Jesus experienced what He saves us from** - He tasted death, bore our sin, and needed the Father to save Him from the grave
 3. **We are called to be "small-s" saviors** - Not saving from sin (only Jesus does that), but partnering with God to help rescue others
 4. **We must overcome the temptation to save ourselves** - Just as Jesus overcame the temptation to save Himself
 5. **"Work out your salvation"** means getting our self-salvation plans out so God can work His salvation in
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Discussion Questions

Seeing Jesus as Savior

1. **Read Psalm 22:16-21.** How does seeing Jesus crying out for salvation change your understanding of His humanity? What does this reveal about His qualification to be our Savior?
2. The sermon stated: "Jesus had to taste everything that we would one day have to taste so that we could identify with it." How does this truth impact your view of Jesus' compassion toward you in your struggles?
3. **Read Hebrews 2:9-10.** How was Jesus "made perfect through suffering" if He was already perfect? What does this teach us about obedience and experience?

Our Call as "Saviors"

4. **Read Obadiah 1:21.** What does it mean that "saviors shall come to Mount Zion"? How is this different from Jesus being THE Savior?
5. Pastor Rob shared the elevator story. Have you ever been so focused on your "spiritual" pursuits that you missed an opportunity to help someone in need? What happened?
6. The sermon asked: "How can my salvation fix them if it won't fix me?" What did Pastor Rob mean by this? How does this challenge the "self-help gospel"?

Working Out Our Salvation

7. **Read Philippians 2:12-13.** Pastor Rob suggested "work out your salvation" means getting our self-salvation plans OUT so God can work His salvation IN. What are some ways people try to "save themselves"? (Examples: 401k, self-improvement, religious activity, etc.)
8. **Reflection Question:** How have you tried to save yourself? Be honest. What areas of your life are you still trusting in your own plans rather than fully depending on Jesus?
9. **Read Luke 9:23-25.** Jesus said whoever tries to save their life will lose it. What does it look like practically to "lose your life" for Jesus' sake?

Staying on God's Path

10. The sermon mentioned being tempted to "lay down your cross." What situations or seasons make you most tempted to abandon God's path for an easier route?
11. **Read Psalm 23:3-4.** How can God lead us in "paths of righteousness" that go through "the valley of the shadow of death"? What does this teach us about God's plan versus our comfort?
12. Pastor Rob said: "The plan of God is designed to squeeze you out of your own salvation." Have you experienced a season where God seemed to be removing your self-sufficiency? What was that like?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: The Dependency Audit

- Each day, ask the Holy Spirit: "Where am I trying to save myself today?"
- Journal what He reveals
- Confess each area and declare your dependence on Jesus

Option 2: The Rescue Mission

- Ask God to show you one person who is "stuck" and needs help
- Don't just pray for them—get up from your "recliner" and DO something
- Share your story of how Jesus saved you

Option 3: The Cross-Carrying Commitment

- Identify one area where you're tempted to take an "easier path"
- Recommit to staying on God's path even if it's difficult
- Find an accountability partner in the group to check in with

Group Action Step

As a group, discuss: What would it look like for our group to become "small-s saviors" in our community? Identify one practical way you can help rescue/serve people together this month.

Reflection Questions for Personal Time

1. If Jesus were to ask you right now, "Where is your faith?" regarding your current circumstances, what would you honestly answer?
 2. Complete this sentence: "I would feel saved if _____." Now ask: Is that Jesus or is that something else?
 3. What "melted bucket of ice" are you holding onto (comfort, security, religious routine) when God is calling you to help someone in their "elevator"?
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Closing Exercise

Corporate Prayer of Renunciation and Commitment:

Have someone read this prayer aloud, with everyone agreeing together:

"Father, today we renounce self-salvation. We fall out of agreement with every hidden plan in our souls that thinks we can fix ourselves. We burn the ships. We don't have a plan B. We are fully dependent on Your salvation, Jesus. You are the Savior—the only one who could have saved Himself and didn't. We come under Your grace and Your victory. Work out our salvation so You can work in Yours. Make us like Jesus—fully dependent on You—so the world can see You on display in us. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Scripture Memory Verse

Luke 9:24 - "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

Looking Ahead

Next week, continue reflecting on what manner of man Jesus is. Come prepared to share one new thing you've discovered about Jesus this week.

Main Points – Savior

Sermon Summary:

This sermon explores Jesus as Savior, emphasizing that as believers behold Christ in His saving role, they are transformed into His likeness and called to become "saviors" (small 's') who participate in God's redemptive work. The message challenges the congregation to abandon self-salvation efforts and fully depend on Christ. Jesus modeled complete dependence on the Father, experiencing the need for salvation from sin's consequences (not His own sin, but ours) so He could be our perfect Savior. The sermon calls believers to work out their own salvation—meaning to eliminate their self-saving attempts—so God can work His salvation into them. This transformation enables believers to help rescue others, not through their own strength, but as vessels of God's saving grace. The core message is that Jesus overcame the temptation to save Himself so He could save us, and we must overcome the temptation to save ourselves so we can help others find salvation in Christ.

Key Points:

- Every time we see Jesus as He truly is, we are being transformed into His image
- Jesus is Savior (Yeshua - "Yahweh saves"), and believers are called to become saviors who help rescue others
- Jesus needed to be saved from the consequences of our sin that He took upon Himself, modeling complete dependence on the Father
- Jesus overcame the temptation to save Himself (He could have called 12 legions of angels) in order to be our Savior
- Believers must "work out" their own salvation—eliminate self-saving attempts—so God can work His salvation into them
- Our weaknesses and inadequacies do not disqualify us; they are opportunities for God's power to be displayed
- The world needs to see believers who are fully dependent on Jesus, not people who appear to have it all together
- Self-preservation is a universal temptation that must be overcome to fulfill God's purposes
- True ministry comes from empty boats—when we've exhausted our own efforts and recognize our need for Jesus
- Saviors will arise on Mount Zion at the end of the age—people God uses to set others free

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:41 - "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"
- Matthew 1:21 - "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"
- Obadiah 21 - "Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's"
- Judges 6:12-16 - Gideon called to save Israel despite his weakness
- Psalm 16:10 - "You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption"

- Psalm 22:16-21 - Prophetic psalm about crucifixion and Jesus crying out for salvation
- Luke 23:35-37 - "He saved others; let Him save Himself"
- Luke 9:23-24 - "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it"
- Philippians 2:12-13 - "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"
- Matthew 26:52-54 - Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels but chose not to save Himself
- Hebrews 2:9-10 - Jesus made perfect through suffering
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 - Beholding Jesus transforms us into His image
- Romans 8:28-29 - All things work together for good; predestined to be conformed to Christ's image

Discussion Questions – Savior

How does the story of the disciples in the storm challenge our tendency to accuse God of not caring when we face difficulties, and what does Jesus' rest in the boat reveal about His character?

In what ways have you tried to 'save yourself' through your own efforts, and how might God be inviting you to 'work out' that self-salvation so He can work His salvation in you?

What does it mean that Jesus had to 'learn obedience' and be 'made perfect through suffering' even though He was sinless, and how does this shape our understanding of spiritual maturity?

How does recognizing that Jesus experienced being 'saved' by the Father from the grave change your perspective on what it means to be dependent on God?

The sermon suggests our weaknesses are God's opportunity rather than our disqualification. Where in your life do you need to embrace this truth instead of hiding your inadequacies?

What is the difference between being 'the Savior' (capital S) and being 'saviors' (lowercase s) as mentioned in Obadiah, and how does this distinction protect us from pride while empowering us for ministry?

How does the metaphor of the empty boat and the stuck elevator illustrate our calling to help others who are in situations we ourselves have experienced?

Jesus overcame the temptation to save Himself so He could be our Savior. What 'crosses' are you being tempted to lay down that God is actually calling you to carry for His purposes?

What does it mean practically to be 'fully dependent on display' for others, and how might this kind of transparent dependence on God be more powerful than appearing to have everything together?

How does understanding that 'the steps of a good man are ordered by God' yet 'a righteous man falls seven times' help you navigate difficult seasons without abandoning the path God has set before you?

Scriptures – Savior

Explicitly Mentioned References

1. **Mark 4:41** - "What manner of man is this?" (disciples' response after Jesus calms the storm)
2. **Luke 5** - Fishermen's empty boats, Jesus teaching from the boat
3. **Matthew 1:21** - Angel to Joseph about naming Jesus (Yeshua - "Yahweh saves")
4. **Obadiah 1:21** - "Saviors shall come to Mount Zion"
5. **Judges 6:12-16** - Angel appears to Gideon, calling him to save Israel
6. **1 Peter 2:24** - Jesus bore our sins in his own body
7. **Romans 6:23** - "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life"
8. **Romans 5:12** - Sin entered the world through one man's disobedience
9. **Hebrews 2:9** - Jesus tasted death for everyone
10. **Hebrews 2:14** (alluded to) - Jesus sanctifies those being sanctified
11. **Psalms 16:10** - "You will not leave my soul in Sheol"
12. **Acts 13:33-35** - Paul referencing Jesus' resurrection and Psalm 16
13. **Psalms 22:16-21** - Prophetic psalm about crucifixion ("they pierced my hands and feet")
14. **Philippians 2:12-13** - "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"
15. **Matthew 26:52-54** - Jesus tells Peter to put away his sword, mentions 12 legions of angels
16. **Matthew 16** (alluded to) - Peter rebukes Jesus about going to the cross
17. **Luke 23:32-37** - Crucifixion scene, "He saved others, let him save himself"
18. **Luke 9:23-25** - "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily"

Additional References Alluded To

19. **2 Corinthians 5:21** - Jesus became sin for us (alluded to in discussion)
20. **Romans 8:28-29** - "All things work together for good... conformed to the image of the Son"
21. **1 John 3:2** - "When he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is"
22. **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** - God chooses the weak things (alluded to in Gideon discussion)
23. **Hebrews 4:15** - Jesus touched with feelings of our infirmities
24. **Hebrews 5:8** - Jesus learned obedience through suffering (alluded to)
25. **Luke 23:46** - "Into your hands I commit my spirit"
26. **Psalms 23:3-4** - "Paths of righteousness... valley of the shadow of death"
27. **Psalms 37:23-24** - "Steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord"
28. **Proverbs 24:16** - "A righteous man falls seven times but rises again"
29. **Matthew 5:6** - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness"

30. **1 Timothy 6:17** - Don't trust in uncertain riches (alluded to)

Devotional – Savior

Day 1: The Savior Who Experienced Our Need

Reading: Hebrews 2:9-18

Devotional:

Jesus didn't save us from a distance. He entered fully into human experience, tasting death for everyone and being made perfect through suffering. This doesn't mean He was imperfect in character, but that He experienced obedience, suffering, and dependence as a man. He knows what it feels like to need saving. When you cry out for help today, remember your Savior has been where you are. He was touched by every feeling of human weakness so He could be a merciful High Priest. Your struggles don't disqualify you—they connect you to the One who overcame them all. Let His understanding draw you closer today.

Reflection: Where do you need to experience Jesus as the One who truly understands your struggle?

Day 2: Working Out Self-Salvation

Reading: Philippians 2:12-18

Devotional:

We all have hidden plans to save ourselves—through performance, control, financial security, or human approval. Paul's instruction to "work out your salvation" invites us to identify and release these self-rescue attempts. Only when our hands are empty can God fill them with His salvation. Jesus could have saved Himself but chose dependence on the Father instead. What are you clinging to that promises security apart from Jesus? Your 401k, your reputation, your abilities? These aren't evil, but they cannot save you. Today, identify one area where you're trusting something other than Jesus, and consciously surrender it. Let God work out your self-salvation so He can work in His.

Reflection: What self-salvation strategy do you need to release today?

Day 3: The Temptation to Save Yourself

Reading: Matthew 26:47-56

Devotional:

Jesus had 72,000 angels at His command but chose the cross instead. Peter's sword represented the human impulse to rescue ourselves from God's difficult path. But Jesus knew that some purposes require suffering. The path of righteousness often leads through the valley of the shadow of death. Are you being tempted to abandon your cross? Is someone offering you an escape from the very circumstance God is using to transform you? Jesus' strength wasn't in avoiding suffering but in surrendering to the Father's plan.

Your calling may feel overwhelming, but remember Gideon: "Go in this your strength"—the strength of knowing your weakness positions you for God's power.

Reflection: What difficult path are you tempted to escape that God may be asking you to walk?

Day 4: Saved to Save Others

Reading: Obadiah 1:15-21

Devotional:

"Saviors shall come to Mount Zion." Not saviors who rescue through their own power, but those who've experienced rescue and can guide others to the true Savior. You cannot help someone stuck in an elevator if you've never needed rescue yourself. Your brokenness, your desperate moments when you rang the bell for help—these qualify you to minister. The world doesn't need people with all the answers; it needs people who know the Answer. Your testimony isn't about how you fixed yourself; it's about how Jesus saved you. Today, remember: your weaknesses aren't disqualifications—they're your credentials. God uses empty boats, weak clans, and the least in the house to display His glory.

Reflection: How has your experience of being saved equipped you to help others?

Day 5: Fully Dependent on Display

Reading: John 5:19-30

Devotional:

"I can of my own self do nothing." The Son of God modeled complete dependence. He only did what He saw the Father doing. This is the pattern for small-s saviors—not independence, but radical dependence on display. The world will see Jesus when they see a people who've abandoned plan B, who've burned their ships, who trust fully in God's salvation alone. This isn't passivity; it's the most powerful position possible. When you stop trying to save yourself, God's saving power flows through you. Today, choose dependence. In your decisions, your conversations, your challenges—pause and ask, "What is the Father doing?" Your greatest strength is admitting you have none apart from Him.

Reflection: In what situation today will you choose dependence over self-reliance?

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank you that Jesus is our Savior—the only One who could save Himself but didn't. Help us work out our self-salvation so You can work in Yours. Make us a people fully dependent on You, that the world might see Jesus on display in us. In Jesus' name, Amen.