

Lesson 2

What is Salvation?

Deliverance from sin and its consequences

Defining Salvation

Salvation is a multifaceted concept that includes deliverance from the penalty of sin, liberation from sin's power in our lives, and the initiation of a spiritual relationship with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. More simply put, *salvation is a gift based on the sacrifice of Christ that brings deliverance from sin and its consequences*. It encompasses three aspects:

1. *Release* from the penalty of sin through **forgiveness**, Colossians 1.14; 2.14-15.
2. *Freedom gained* from sin's power in one's life through **sanctification**, Romans 8.13; Ephesians 3.16.
3. *Establishment of spiritual relationships* and personal **access** to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 2.11-13; Colossians 1.27; Galatians 4.6.

Salvation brings us:

Fellowship

We long for communion with God. Our hearts yearn for Him. We love Him. By giving us access, the Spirit has opened the avenue of our much-needed fellowship with God, Romans 8.15-16; Galatians 4.6.

Resources

My God shall supply all your needs, ... Philippians 4.19. See also Ephesians 3.16-21; 6.10-14.

Wisdom

If we lack wisdom, we can ask and know we will receive an answer in abundance, without being begrudged, James 1.5.

Adopted as Children

Through salvation, God adopts us as His children.

He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, Ephesians 1.5.

And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty, 2 Corinthians 6.18.

Salvation unites us with Christ, 2 Corinthians 5.17; John 15.4-5, and the Spirit indwells, Acts 2.38; Romans 8.9; 1 Corinthians 3.16. This restores the fellowship between God and man that was broken by sin.

Upon our salvation, the Spirit serves as a *seal* or mark of ownership by God, Ephesians 4.13.³ Other references to our being sealed are found in 2 Corinthians 1.22 and Ephesians 4.30. The Spirit is also identified as the pledge or *down payment* of our inheritance, Ephesians 1.14a. (See also 2 Corinthians 1.22; 5.5.) He is the first installment, which will be followed by the full payment to be given at the return of Christ, Ephesians 1.14b.

From this we learn how the Holy Spirit plays an important role in establishing us as members of God's family. When God saves us from sin, He adopts us into His household through the regeneration and renewal of the Spirit. In this way, the Spirit acts as a family crest testifying, "This one belongs to me."

A Qualified Savior

Our sin separates us from God, necessitating a mediator to reconcile us to Him. Jesus is the only one qualified for this role, bridging the gap between God and humanity.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time, 1 Timothy 2.5-6.

Being fully God, He could pay the price for our sins through His death. As fully man, He understands our struggles and serves as our merciful High Priest, Hebrews 2.17-18; 4.14-16. Since He is divine, He is able to bear our sins. Since He is human, He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

Scripture also reveals Jesus:

- is the source of life, John 1.4; 1 John 5.11-12.
- holds authority over life and death, John 10.18; 11.25.
- is sinless, Hebrews 4.15; 7.25.
- is worthy of all worship and exaltation, Revelation 5.12; Hebrews 1.6.
- seated at God's right hand, having made purification for our sins, Hebrews 1.2-3.

No one else can offer the salvation that Jesus provides, Acts 4.12. His ability to give life, authority over life and death, and sinlessness qualify Him *alone* to save.

What did Jesus do to Save Us?

The nature of sin demands that it be paid for, as God's justice requires a verdict for sin. Since we cannot save ourselves, only someone sinless could bear our sins on our behalf, Isaiah 53.6. To satisfy God's justice and the demands of sin, Jesus willingly gave His life as a ransom for many, Mark 10.45. Through His atoning blood, we have redemption and forgiveness of sins, Ephesians 2.7. As Ezekiel and Paul affirm, *the wages of sin is death*, Ezekiel 18.20; Romans 6.23. Jesus paid this debt through His crucifixion, so that believers might have eternal life, Colossians 2.11-14.

Conditions of Salvation

Salvation is not something we can earn or achieve on our own. The conditions of salvation do not save us; rather, they are the means through which we appropriate or access the saving power of Christ's blood. Grace is the basis of our salvation, Romans 3:24-25, and we receive it through **faith**, a trust in the

One who saves us, Ephesians 2.8. *Faith is dependence on Christ crucified for salvation and accepting His atonement for our sins.* It is not the actions that save us but faith in Christ's redemptive power, Romans 3.25. **Repentance** is a turning away from sin and preparing our hearts for God's mercy. **Baptism** is immersion in water, acting in conjunction with faith and repentance, for the remission of sin.

These are not arbitrary demands but natural responses to Christ's sacrifice. Jesus *obtained* salvation for us, and faith, repentance, and baptism open the way unto it. Christ *achieved* salvation for us, we *receive* it.⁴ Each condition is a direct expression of faith in Christ as our offering for sin.

Christ's shed blood is the reason we find mercy from God, Romans 3.25, and faith in the power of that sacrifice is how we come to experience it.

God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus, Romans 3.26 CSB.

for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus, Romans 3.26 NASB.

When Paul says we have been *justified by faith*, Romans 5.1., he is identifying our trust in Jesus as the offering for our sin. Likewise, repentance and baptism are connected to the cross. The conditions weren't chosen for arbitrary reasons. The cross does not call us to obey just to obey, it calls us to rely on Jesus as our all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Christ is the Savior. When someone responds to the gospel, they are not trading their obedience for salvation. Instead, they are embracing Christ as the Sin Bearer, Savior, and Redeemer. Our focus must always remain on Jesus, for He is the true source of our salvation. The conditions are only significant because they are our responses to the fact that Jesus is Lord and Christ, Acts 2.36; Colossians 2.6b.

What's In This for Us?

Embrace Forgiveness Daily

Recognize that through Christ, we have forgiveness for our sins. Regularly reflect on Colossians 1.14 and 2.14-15 and live in the freedom that comes from release from the penalty of sin.

Pursue Sanctification

Actively work on being set apart for God's purpose. Romans 8.13 and Ephesians 3.16 suggest that it is a daily process, so seek personal growth and avoid patterns of sin. Embrace your identity as an adopted child of God, as stated in Ephesians 1.5 and 2 Corinthians 6.18. Reflect this in how you interact with others and yourself, knowing you are valued and loved by God.

Live the Reality of Salvation

Don't just learn about salvation; live it out. Let the knowledge of your salvation through Christ influence your behavior, choices, and outlook on life. Your salvation is ongoing, so continue to engage in practices that reflect your relationship with Christ.

Conclusion

As we conclude our exploration of salvation, let us hold steadfast to the truths we've discovered together. Salvation is far more than a one-time event; it is a continuous journey of being released from the penalty and power of sin and stepping into a dynamic, life-giving relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In this journey, we are not passive observers but active participants, responding to God's grace initially through faith, repentance, and baptism, and then from lifelong gratefulness, appreciation, and faithful service.

Remember that we are adopted into God's eternal family, a truth that redefines our identity and fills our lives with purpose and hope. Our union with Christ is the source of our strength and fruitfulness, and the Spirit is our ever-present Helper and Guide. Jesus Christ, our qualified Savior, has bridged the chasm sin created, offering Himself as a ransom for our sins and extending to us the gift of eternal life.

May we carry with us the assurance of our salvation, not as a concept to be merely understood, but as a reality to be lived out. Walk in the freedom Christ has secured for you, allowing your life to be shaped and driven by the power of the Gospel.

For Class Interaction and Discussion

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction to Salvation
 - Definition and Importance
 - Three Aspects of Salvation
2. Adoption as God's Children
 - The New Identity in Christ
 - Implications for Our Lives
3. Union with Christ
 - The Vine and Branches
 - Abiding in Christ
4. The Role of the Spirit
 - Comforter and Guide
 - Empowerment for Living
5. A Qualified Savior
 - Jesus: Fully God and Fully Man
 - The Only Mediator
6. The Attributes of Jesus
 - Life and Authority
 - Sinlessness and Exaltation
7. The Work of Christ for Salvation
 - Substitutionary Atonement
 - Redemption and Justification
8. The Conditions of Salvation
 - Faith, Repentance, and Baptism
 - Responses to God's Grace
9. Grace and Mercy
 - The Gift of Salvation
 - Trust and Reliance on God. Conclusion and Prayer

Definitions:

1. Salvation:
2. Sealed by the Spirit:
3. Faith:
4. Repentance:
5. Baptism:

Thought Questions for Discussion:

1. How do you personally understand the concept of salvation?
2. In what ways have you experienced being adopted as a child of God?
3. What does it mean to be in union with Christ, and how does this affect your daily life?
4. Why is it essential that our Savior be both divine and human?
5. Which attribute of Jesus do you find most compelling, and why?
6. How does the idea of Jesus as your substitute, taking on the penalty for your sins, resonate with you?
7. Discuss the difference between earning salvation through works and responding to God's grace with faith.
8. How do grace and mercy shape your understanding of God's character?
9. What steps can you take to deepen your trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Suggested Group Activities:

1. **Group Discussion:** In small groups, discuss the concepts of salvation as presented in this lesson.

Final Encouraging Word:

As we wrap up this lesson on defining salvation, remember you are not walking this path alone. You have been adopted into God's family, united with Christ, and filled with His Spirit. Embrace your identity as God's child, live in the freedom Christ has won for you, and rely on the Spirit's strength each day. Hold fast to the truth that Jesus is fully capable, and your salvation is secure in His loving hands. Go forth in confidence!

³ “In ancient times a “seal” referred to the act of physically placing one’s unique mark or seal upon an object or document in order to tie that object or document legally to the owner of the seal. The seal itself (*sphragis*) was an image carved in relief on a small object, such as a stone that could be mounted in a signet ring; the act of sealing involved the pressing of that image into soft clay or wax attached to the object or document to be “sealed.” Modern counterparts include a branding iron, a notary public’s official stamping instrument, a copyright, and even a person’s signature. See Cottrell, Jack. *What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit: Power from on High*. What the Bible Says Series. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2007, p. 350.

⁴ Moser, K. C. *The Gist of Romans*. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, p. xiii.