

The Joy of Salvation (Baptism Sunday)

October 11, 2025

Opening Monologue

Welcome AVC Family and Friends to our special spontaneous baptism service. Last Sunday we had a Holy Spirit filled service that led to many people saying YES to Jesus!

There is nothing... and I mean NOTHING more important in this life than giving and surrendering your life to Jesus Christ. If your family and children don't know Jesus, you need to make it a priority to tell them about the Good News of Christ. If you don't know how to do this, reach out to AVC for help.

This week's short sermon/ encouragement is called: "The Joy of Salvation." Here is Biblical Fact you may not have seen or read before... coming to you from Jesus' Mouth. "I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one person who repents of their sins." Wow! Jesus is literally saying that heaven's angels are celebrating when a person says yes to Jesus... think about that-fascinating!

I would encourage you to come celebrate with us this Sunday; and be encouraged by God's Word- The Joy of Salvation. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

In Christ,

Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "The Joy of Salvation" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our

website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Texts

Luke 15:10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2015%3A10&version=NIV>

Romans 6:23

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206%3A23&version=NIV>

Romans 10:9-11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2010%3A9-11&version=NIV>

2 Corinthians 5:17

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205%3A17&version=NIV>

Sermon Biblical Reflection

The Joy of Salvation: A Heavenly Celebration

The sermon opens with a powerful declaration: “There is Nothing Greater in this Life than saying Yes to JESUS.” The scripture from Luke 15:10—“I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one person who repents of their sins”—vividly illustrates the cosmic celebration that erupts when a single soul turns to Christ. This verse, nestled in the context of Jesus’ parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, underscores God’s relentless pursuit of humanity and His boundless joy when the lost are found. The image of angels rejoicing in heaven is a profound reminder that salvation is not merely a personal decision but a moment of eternal significance. It’s as if the heavens pause to celebrate each individual who repents and receives God’s grace. This joy is not rooted in human achievement but in the transformative power of God’s love. The

sermon amplifies this truth, encouraging people to see their decision to follow Jesus as a cause for divine celebration, echoing the enthusiasm of the angels and affirming the worth of every soul in God's eyes.

Salvation as a Gift: The Heart of the Gospel

Central to the sermon is the truth articulated in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." This verse encapsulates the stark contrast between humanity's natural state and God's gracious provision. The "wages of sin" represent what we deserve—death, both physical and spiritual, as the consequence of our rebellion against God. Yet, in His mercy, God offers a gift that we could never earn: eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The emphasis on salvation as a gift is critical. In a world obsessed with merit, where value is often measured by what we do or achieve, the gospel stands in radical opposition. Salvation cannot be purchased by church attendance, financial contributions, or moral goodness. This truth echoes Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." The Greek word for "gift" here, *dōron*, implies something freely given, without expectation of repayment. God's grace is not a transaction; it is an outpouring of His love, initiated and completed by Him.

The sermon powerfully dismantles the misconception that human effort can secure salvation. Belonging to a church, while valuable for community and growth, does not save. Generosity to the church, while a response to God's blessings, does not earn eternal life. Even being a "good person" falls short, for as Isaiah 64:6 reminds us, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" in comparison to God's holiness. Salvation rests solely on the finished work of Jesus—His death on the cross and His resurrection—through which He paid the penalty for sin and conquered death on our behalf.

The Simplicity and Power of Confession and Faith

Romans 10:9-11, which provides a clear roadmap to salvation: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." This passage

distills the gospel into its simplest yet most profound elements: confession and belief. The act of confessing “Jesus is Lord” is not merely verbal but a public declaration of allegiance to Christ as Sovereign. The Greek word for “Lord” (kyrios) implies absolute authority, signifying that the believer surrenders their life to Jesus’ rule. Believing in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead is the foundation of Christian faith. The resurrection is the linchpin of the gospel, proving Jesus’ victory over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:17). This belief is not a mere intellectual assent but a deep trust that transforms the heart. As noted, “it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” Justification—being declared righteous before God—comes through faith, while confession seals the commitment publicly.

The promise in Romans 10:11, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame,” assures believers that their faith in Christ is secure. This echoes Isaiah 28:16, where God promises a sure foundation for those who trust in Him. Salvation is accessible to all who trust in Jesus, regardless of their past or perceived worthiness. This universality underscores the gift-nature of salvation—it is offered freely to anyone who believes, without distinction.

A New Creation: The Transformative Power of Salvation

The closing scripture, 2 Corinthians 5:17, beautifully encapsulates the outcome of salvation: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” This verse speaks to the radical transformation that occurs when a person receives God’s gift of salvation. The phrase “new creation” (kainē ktisis) suggests a complete renewal, as if the believer is reborn (John 3:1-9) into a new existence. The old life—marked by sin, guilt, and separation from God—is replaced by a new identity defined by grace, forgiveness, and communion with Christ.

This transformation is not superficial but profound, affecting every aspect of a person’s being. As Galatians 2:20 declares, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” The believer’s old self is crucified with Jesus, and the resurrected life of Christ now animates their existence. Baptism symbolizes the

believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ (Romans 6:4), a visible testimony to the inner transformation wrought by God's grace.

The Unmerited Gift: A Call to Humility and Gratitude

By stressing that salvation cannot be bought or earned, your sermon invites the congregation to a posture of humility and gratitude. In a culture that often equates worth with accomplishment, the gospel humbles us by revealing our utter dependence on God's grace. As Titus 3:5 affirms, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." This truth liberates believers from the burden of striving to earn God's favor and invites them to rest in His unmerited love.

Moreover, the gift of salvation calls for a response of gratitude and worship. The joy highlighted—both in heaven and on earth—flows from recognizing the magnitude of what God has done. The individuals being baptized in the service are not only recipients of this gift but also living testimonies to its power. Their public declaration through baptism mirrors the confession of Romans 10:9 and serves as a beacon of hope to others, inviting them to experience the same joy and transformation. (1)

Commentary Thoughts on Main Passages

JESUS TELLS THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN / 15:8-10

In this parable, Jesus portrays God's love for people who fall into a life of sin. They are lost, disconnected from their true owner, God himself. But their owner (the Creator of the universe) doesn't give up on people. Instead, he compassionately searches for them, freely offering them forgiveness through his Son, Jesus Christ. He reaches out to them. And when they accept his offer, a noisy celebration breaks out in the heavens. A sinner has come home; a person has been reconciled with his or her Creator. Today God still reaches out to sinners. Through the preaching of the gospel, he offers salvation.

15:8-9 “Or suppose a woman has ten valuable silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and look in every corner of the house and sweep every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because she has found her lost coin.” Palestinian women would often receive ten silver coins as a wedding gift. Besides their monetary value, these coins held sentimental value like that of a wedding ring; to lose one would be extremely distressing. Each coin was of great value. The ten coins could have been this woman’s life savings, meant to support her in a time of need. One coin would have been a tenth of that nest egg. Upon discovering that one of the coins was missing, the woman would light a lamp in order to see into the dark corners, and sweep every part of the dirt-packed floor in hope of finding it. Although the woman still had nine coins, she would not rest until the tenth was retrieved. Her search was rewarded—she finds it. Like the shepherd, she shared her joy with her friends and neighbors so they could rejoice with her.

15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Just as a shepherd would rejoice over finding a lost sheep and a woman would rejoice at finding her lost coin, so all heaven rejoices over a repentant sinner. Each individual is precious to God. He rejoices whenever one of his children is found and brought into the kingdom. He actively seeks those lost ones, and when they are found, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God. Through these two parables, Jesus was explaining to his detractors that, while they were not pleased with him, God was pleased that Jesus was seeking the lost souls and bringing them the good news of the kingdom.

Romans 6:23

6:23 The wages of sin is death. This result of sin is not just physical death—everyone dies physically, believers and unbelievers alike. This refers to eternal separation from God in hell. This is the wage that a person receives for his or her rebellion against God. Those in hell will find no comfort in the truth that they have been paid exactly what they earned.

The free gift of God is eternal life. But instead of wages, those

who believe receive a gracious gift from God—eternal life. Eternal life does not mean endless life on earth, but resurrection from death to eternal glory with God. Because eternal life is a gift, we cannot earn or purchase it. It would be foolish for someone to offer to pay for a gift given out of love. To be a gift, it must be given and received freely. A more appropriate response to a loved one who offers a gift is grateful acceptance. Our salvation is a gift of God, not something of our own doing (Ephesians 2:8–9). He saved us because of his mercy, not because of any righteous acts on our part (Titus 3:5). How much more we should accept with thanksgiving the gift that God has freely given to us.

THE CHOICE

You are free to choose between two masters, but you are not free to adjust the consequences of your choice. Each of the two masters pays with his own kind of currency. The currency of sin is death. That is all you can expect or hope for in life without God. Christ's currency is eternal life—new life with God that begins on earth and continues forever with God. What choice have you made?

Romans 10:9-11

10:9 If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord.” The word is near—as near as your mouth and heart (10:8; Deuteronomy 30:14). To “confess” (homologeo) means to “give verbal affirmation,”—in this case to acknowledge with your mouth that Jesus Christ died and was raised for you. Anyone can say he or she believes something, but God knows each person's heart. In this confession, it is not enough to merely utter the words; they must be declared, professed, proclaimed “from the heart,” expressing our full conviction. For salvation you must truly believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:17 Paul asserts how the Resurrection is totally interrelated with our salvation: “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (NIV). Jesus is distinct from all other religious leaders: he is the only “Lord” to have risen from the grave. This makes Christianity more than a philosophy of life or a religious option; it is the only way to be saved.

You will be saved. The gospel message in a nutshell is “believe and confess Jesus as Lord, and you will be saved.” There is no reference to

works or rituals. The point of decision is between a person and God, but the point of confession implies another person. It is true that God is often our first confessor, but having others witness our confession confirms our belief. In fact, to confess and to believe become mutually related responses. If one is true, the other follows.

Jesus is Lord. The title Lord (kurios), though rarely used outside of diplomatic circles today, carried great weight in Paul's day. It was a title of respect (similar to sir), a form of address for Roman emperors (similar to "royal highness"), a title given to Greek gods, and the title used in the Greek translation of Old Testament to translate the Hebrew word YAHWEH. When we confess that Jesus is Lord, we are acknowledging his rank or supreme place. We are pledging our obedience and worship; we are placing our life under his protection for safekeeping. We are pledging ourselves and our resources to his control for direction and service. Lord is intended to represent the highest authority to whom we submit.

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

Have you ever been asked, "How do I become a Christian?" These verses give the beautiful answer—salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think it must be a complicated process, but it is not. If we believe in our heart and say with our mouth that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved.

10:10 It is with your heart that you believe and are justified.

You must first believe with your heart—that belief justifies you (God declares you "not guilty" for your sins).

It is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. By prayer to God, you confess with your mouth your belief in God and what he has done for you. As in verses 8-9 above, belief and confession lead to salvation.

As has already been noted, neither of these components that establish our personal relationship with God can be reduced to reciting certain words or assenting to the facts. To believe and to confess involve whole-person commitment. Neither are these components described in such a way that a person might accomplish one without accomplishing the other. They are two parts of a single step, just as lifting the foot and then placing it back down are two movements in

the one act of taking a step. Likewise, one cannot be saved without being justified, nor justified without being saved.

10:11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” To summarize the transaction that he has just described, Paul quotes again from Isaiah 28:16, as he did at the end of chapter 9. Anyone who trusts in Christ will be saved. What appears momentarily in verse 10 to be two separate actions turns out to be two parts to the response the Bible calls trust (or belief).

Paul is not saying that Christians will never be disillusioned or disappointed. At times people will let us down and circumstances will take a turn for the worse. Paul is saying that God will keep his side of the bargain—those who call on him will be saved. God will never fail to provide righteousness to those who believe.

2 Corinthians 5:17

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Christians are brand-new people. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore. Christians are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—they are recreated (a new creation), living in vital union with Christ (Colossians 2:6–7). At conversion, believers are not merely turning over a new leaf; they are beginning a new life under a new Master.

In addition to recreating individual Christians, Jesus is incorporating them into an entirely new order. This new creation that Christ has begun constructing through his work on the cross includes the community of faith and all of creation (see Romans 8:20–21; Ephesians 1:9–10). This recreation of all the earth was something the prophet Isaiah had predicted (see Isaiah 65:17). An important aspect of this completely new creation is how people are reconciled to their Creator and even to other people. The distinction between Jew and Gentile is abolished. In its place is the new creation (see Galatians 6:15). Everything old has passed away. The old order of sin and death has gone; the selfish, sinful human nature has been dealt a death blow (see Galatians 5:16–21, 24). Old ways of thinking, old distinctions,

have been abolished for those who are in Christ. In its place, the new has come. To draw attention to the coming of this new order, Paul announced it with the word “see.”

NEW LIFE

Paul proclaimed a whole new creation in Christ. Too often this verse has been individualized so that the main point is blurred. Many preach, “If anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation.” While this is true, Paul is saying much more. Not only are believers changed from within (mysterious new creations in Christ), but a whole new order of creative energy began with Christ. There is a new covenant, a new perspective, a new body, a new church. All of creation is being renewed.

So sit up. Take notice. The old, worn-out ways are being replaced with new. This is not a superficial change that will be quickly superseded by another novelty. This is an entirely new order of all creation under Christ’s authority. It requires a new way of looking at all people and all of creation. Does your life reflect this new perspective?

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, (1) Logos Bible Program, Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, Guzik, David, Life Application Bible Commentary, Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, Linda Chaffee Taylor, and Grant R. Osborne. 1997. Luke. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1992. Romans. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1992. Romans. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Barton, Bruce B., and Grant R. Osborne. 1999. 1 & 2 Corinthians. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House.

Devotional Reflections and Questions

Read the following passages and engage in the devotional questions:

1. Reflecting on Heavenly Joy (Luke 15:10)

Jesus teaches in Luke 15:10 that there is “rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” How does the image of angels celebrating a single person’s repentance shape your understanding of God’s love for individuals?

2. The Gift of Eternal Life (Romans 6:23)

Romans 6:23 contrasts the “wages of sin” (death) with the “gift of God” (eternal life). Why does the sermon emphasize that salvation is a gift that cannot be earned through good deeds or religious practices? How does this truth challenge or encourage you personally?

3. Confession and Belief (Romans 10:9-11)

Romans 10:9 states, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” What does it mean to confess Jesus as “Lord” (Greek: *kyrios*), a term used for both divine and imperial authority in the Roman world?

4. A New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The sermon highlights 2 Corinthians 5:17: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come.” How does this idea of becoming a “new creation” reflect the transformative power of salvation? What “old” aspects of your life have been transformed by Christ, and what new patterns have emerged?

5. The Role of Baptism in Salvation

The sermon references a spontaneous baptism service, symbolizing the believer’s death to sin and resurrection to new life (Romans 6:6-14). How does baptism serve as a public testimony of the salvation described in the sermon?

6. Responding to God’s Grace with Gratitude

The sermon emphasizes humility and gratitude as responses to the unmerited gift of salvation, citing Titus 3:5: “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” How can gratitude shape your daily walk with God?

7. Sharing the Good News

Pastor Standfest urges believers to share the Good News of Christ with family and friends, emphasizing its priority. Reflect on Romans 10:11,

which promises that “anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” How does this assurance empower you to share your faith? Consider the historical context of early Christian evangelism in a pluralistic Roman world, where believers faced persecution for proclaiming Jesus as Lord. How can you overcome barriers to sharing the gospel in your context, and what role does the joy of salvation play in motivating you?