

C. THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

We believe God saves sinners by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Romans 3:23; Romans 10:9-10

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Theological word is **soteriology**.

And here's the foundational truth we need to understand:

Salvation is God's work from beginning to end.

We don't save ourselves. We can't save ourselves. We don't contribute enough good works to save ourselves.

God saves sinners by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

Salvation begins with grace, continues by grace, and ends with grace.

A. THE PROBLEM: SIN

The first thing we have to understand about salvation is why we need to be saved. And the answer is simple: **We are sinners.**

Romans 3:23 says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Human Depravity

That doesn't mean every person is as evil as they possibly could be. It means that every part of our being has been affected by sin. Our minds. Our hearts. Our desires. Our wills. Our actions. Sin has separated us from God. And Scripture goes even further. **Ephesians 2:1** says: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."

A dead person doesn't need a little encouragement. A dead person doesn't need a self-help book. A dead person doesn't try harder. A dead person needs life.

We Are Incapable of Saving Ourselves

This is where our culture gets Christianity wrong. The world says: "Just be a good person." "Try harder." "Be moral." "Do your best." "Treat people right." But the problem is that being a good person doesn't remove our sin. Biblically, because we are sinners...

We Deserve God's Judgment

God is right to call mankind to account for sin. God is right to judge sin. And God is right to send unredeemed sinners to hell. **Romans 6:23** says:

B. THE NEED: GRACE

We cannot save ourselves.

So we need something we cannot produce ourselves. **We need grace.** God's undeserved favor. God giving us what we could never earn.

Salvation is God's gift. By grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." That's the Gospel.

C. THE NEED: FAITH

But how do we receive salvation?

Through **faith**. We receive Christ through **repentance and faith**.

Repentance means a turning of that mind that results in a turning away from sin.

Faith means turning toward Christ and trusting Him. And we place our trust in **Jesus Christ alone**.

Romans 10:9-10

"That 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."

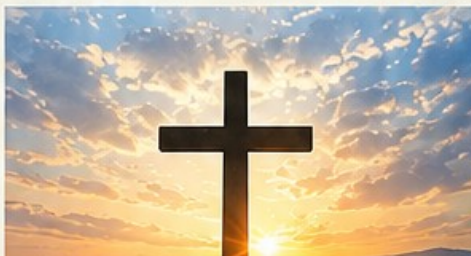
"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

That's the response God calls us to.

Faith Is Trusting Christ.

And even faith itself is a gift from God. It is God who enables sinners to hear the Gospel, understand the Gospel, and respond to the Gospel.

Our hope is not what we have done for God. Our hope is what God has done for us through Christ.



D. THE WORK: JUSTIFICATION

God declares the believing sinner righteous because of Christ.

God doesn't look at the Christian and say: "You have finally become good enough." How silly would that be. By whose definition of good enough... would we use?

Romans 5:1 says:

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

At salvation, God takes a guilty sinner and declares that sinner righteous—not because of what the sinner has done, but because of what Christ has done.

Why can God do that? **Because of the cross.** Because Jesus paid the price. Jesus became our substitute. He took our place. He paid our debt. And when we trust Christ, His righteousness is credited to us.

That's justification.

E. THE WORK: SANCTIFICATION

But salvation doesn't end at conversion.

God doesn't save you and then say:

"You're on your own now." No. God continues His work in us. This is called **sanctification**.

Sanctification is God's ongoing work of transforming believers into the likeness of Christ.

Justification is what God does for us.

Sanctification is what God does in us.

Salvation Continues by Grace

When you become a Christian, you don't immediately become perfect. You're still going to struggle. You're still going to face temptation. You're still going to sin. You're still going to need forgiveness. But there should be a difference.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

God is still working on us.

F. THE RESULT: GLORIFICATION

Glorification.

One day God will finish what He started.

We will no longer struggle with sin.

We will no longer experience death.

We will no longer experience sickness, sorrow, or temptation. That's glorification.

God Will Finish His Work

Think about the progression:

Justification God saves us from the penalty of sin.