

~ *Salvation* ~

NOTES

Second Week: *Obtaining & Keeping it*

- **Belief is the first step** to obtaining salvation, which is available to everyone – not just a chosen few (Mark 16:15-16 and John 3:16-18).
- If we believe with all our heart, then a **change of heart that results in a change of behavior – repentance** – must follow.
 - Repentance is absolutely **necessary for being rescued** from coming judgment (Acts 17:30-31)!
 - **Sinful behavior keeps us from God**; repentance allows us to draw near to Him (Acts 3:19).
 - True belief and **repentance lead to good fruit** that comes out of obedience (Acts 26:20).
- We're also told in the Gospel to be **baptized** by water.
 - A person is born initially of water (through the womb) but must be **spiritually born** as well to enter God's kingdom (John 3:5-6).
 - Baptism has become the **symbolic of the washing away of sin** that Christ offered through His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4).
- Because true faith comes from the heart, a person must **believe** completely that Jesus died for them **and then confess** this belief. Faith – belief – is obtained and strengthened from experiencing the testimonies contained in the Word of God. They serve to 'convince' men of the truth and build faith (Romans 10:17 and 1 Peter 2:1-2).
- To obtain and keep salvation:
 - **Believe** in the gospel – the good news of salvation through Jesus. True belief will bring a new heart.
 - **Repent** by using that new heart to change sinful behavior.
 - Be **baptized** as an outward sign of your new faith.
 - **Increase our faith** through continual exposure to the gospel.
- While the gift of salvation is given by faith and not because of anything we can do to earn it, faith must lead to obedience and therefore production of 'fruit'. In fact, James tells us that **faith – or belief – without obedience (works) is useless** (James 2:14-20).

NOTES

Review: Saved from what?

This week: obtaining and keeping that saving grace

Must believe to be saved – first step

Salvation for all

Repentance:

- Necessary for salvation
- Allows us to draw near to God
- Leads to good fruit that comes out of obedience

~ *Salvation* ~

Second Week: *Obtaining & Keeping it*

Last week, we introduced salvation and discussed why we need it. We learned that man introduced sin and death into a perfect world. Now, the spirit created by God must face judgment and disposition because of that physical death that didn't exist when God created the human body to house it.

This week, we'll take the next step by exploring how to obtain that salvation from God's impending wrath – judgment – and how to keep it.

Scripture tells us emphatically that *belief* is the first step to obtaining salvation. Belief and faith, which by definition is a 'convincing', are synonymous and foundational to achieving relief from the judgment to come. We must confess this belief as a manifestation of the faith that comes from within. Belief and confession are necessary for salvation, which is available to everyone – not just a chosen few. **[Mark 16:15-16]** and **[John 3:16-18]**

If we believe with all our heart, then a *change* of heart must follow. This change of heart, which brings a change in behavior, is called *repentance*. It isn't just a 'feeling bad' about sinful things we've done – it's a turning away from sinful behavior. Those who truly believe in the gospel and in Jesus will stop practicing behavior that's contrary to His ways.

- ✓ Repentance is absolutely necessary for being rescued from coming judgment! **[Acts 17:30-31]**
- ✓ Sinful behavior keeps us from God; repentance allows us to draw near to Him. **[Acts 3:19]**
- ✓ True belief and repentance lead to good fruit that comes out of obedience. **[Acts 26:20]**

Baptism – dying to sinful behavior

Aso, *mikvah*

Born of water and spirit

Baptism for repentance of sin; symbolic now

The Spirit and the testimonies bring faith

Summarize so far:

- Believe
- Repent
- Be baptized
- Increase faith

We're also told in the Gospel to be baptized by water. It's not a component of salvation per-se; however, the act symbolizes our 'dying' to sinful behavior. It is also a part of the marriage covenant with Christ and represents the washing away of sin in a traditional *mikvah*. The following references drive home the requirements of belief and confession, and the outward sign of baptism:

- ✓ A person is born initially of water (through the womb) but must be spiritually born as well to enter God's kingdom. This spiritual rebirth comes through God's spirit. **[John 3:5-6]**
- ✓ Baptism, before Christ became the one sacrifice for all, signified repentance of sin; however, it became symbolic of the washing away of sin that Christ offered through His death and resurrection. **[Romans 6:3-4]**

Because true faith comes from the heart, a person must believe completely that Jesus died for them and then confess this belief. But what generates and grows this belief? We learn from Scripture that God's Holy Spirit draws men to Him. Hearing the Gospel does the rest if the person has an open heart. So, faith – belief – is obtained and strengthened from experiencing the testimonies contained in the Word of God. They serve to 'convince' men of the truth and build faith. **[Romans 10:17]** and **[1 Peter 2:1-2]**

Let's stop and catch our breath for a moment, summarizing what we know so far about the beginnings of salvation. I say *beginnings* because the steps we've just covered compose the start of our new life and journey. What you'll learn in great detail in the next section is that obedience is critical to staying on that narrow path leading to the kingdom of God. To obtain salvation:

1. Believe in the gospel – the good news of salvation through Jesus. True belief will bring a new heart.
2. Repent by using that new heart to change sinful behavior.
3. Be baptized as an outward sign of your new faith.
4. Increase our faith through continual exposure to the gospel. This is critical, as the testimonies and instruction will 'convince' us while also teaching us about being obedient to Jesus. A lack of obedience will result in a worthless belief (faith). After all, even the demons believe in Jesus.

Belief is NOT an emotion!

Why people accept salvation:

- Fear

- Peer pressure

- Emotion

These produce shallow faith

Parable of the soils (hearers of the Word and their reaction)

What separates us from them? Obedience! So, we'll spend significant time with this topic in the next section.

An additional word on faith/belief: it's not an emotion and must be based on something concrete (like the testimonies contained in the Bible). People accept the gift of salvation for a variety of reasons, only one of which is true belief. Motives based on emotion, fear, or pressures often create a false conversion, or at least one that has no real foundation.

- **Fear.** This was probably a more common reason to say the 'sinner's prayer' back in the days of fire and brimstone teaching. In this scenario, an individual may feel that although they're not sure about what they believe, it would be best to cover their bases by saying that prayer to accept salvation.
- **Peer pressure.** People need to socialize and feel as though they belong to groups of other human beings. A person may, as a result, agree to accept Jesus' salvation because others they respect are Christians or they're at a church event and may feel pressured to do this. Going to church and participating in religious practices (to include prayer) because of family tradition may also fall into this category.
- **Emotion.** The hearer gets caught up in the moment, mistaking emotion for the presence of God's Spirit. Today's 'seeker-sensitive' churches and emotionally-rich worship music often create an environment where someone *feels* God's presence and may even say a prayer for salvation as a result.

Unfortunately, each of these scenarios creates a very shallow base that will most likely result in a quick falling away from new-found faith. Jesus told a parable of sower to illustrate the different situations and heart conditions surrounding hearing the gospel and faith (see Luke 8: 5-8 & 11-15).

1. Seed by the side of the road: taken away by the devil; no root.
2. Seed on the rocks: immediate joy, but withered; little root.
3. Seed among the thorns: some root, but choked to death by worry/strife.
4. Seed on good soil: firm foundation; **good fruit in time with patience.**

Faith MUST lead to obedience!

Review/summary:

- Salvation=rescue
- Life-long process (sanctification)
- We believe from the ‘convincing’ of the Spirit and Scripture
- We must confess
- We must repent
- We must be obedient

While the gift of salvation is given by faith and not because of anything we can do to earn it, I hope you understand clearly by now that faith must lead to obedience and therefore production of ‘fruit’. In the sower/soil parable, Jesus explained that the ‘good soil’ is the man who hears and understands the gospel and then acts accordingly. The seed of gospel sown on *rocky places* represents the person who hears the gospel and believes but then doesn’t act and falls away from the faith. In fact, James tells us that faith – or belief – without obedience (works) is useless. **[James 2:14-20]**

So far, we’ve learned this about salvation and obtaining it:

1. Salvation is a rescuing from future judgment, and eternal life.
2. Turning toward salvation, which is a life-long process:
 - a. We believe because of the convincing that comes from the gospel’s message and testimonies.
 - b. We must confess that belief and display it through baptism.
 - c. We must repent of sin by using our changed heart to change any behavior that’s contrary to that portrayed in the gospel.
3. Faith/belief must be followed by actions we do in obedience to Jesus.

| <i>Scripture</i> | <i>Summary</i> |
|------------------|---|
| Mark 16:15-16 | Belief is the first step to obtaining salvation. |
| John 3:16-18 | Belief is the first step to obtaining salvation. |
| Acts 17:30-31 | Repentance is necessary for salvation. |
| Acts 3:19 | Sinful behavior keeps us from God; repentance allows us to draw near to Him |
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| Acts 26:20 | True belief and repentance lead to good fruit that comes out of obedience |
| John 3:5-6 | A person is born initially of water (through the womb) but must be spiritually born as well |
| Romans 6:3-4 | Baptism has become the symbolic of the washing away of sin |
| Romans 10:17 | Word of God serves to ‘convince’ men of the truth and build faith |
| | |
| 1 Peter 2:1-2 | Word of God serves to ‘convince’ men of the truth and build faith |
| James 2:14-20 | Faith – or belief – without obedience (works) is useless |

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” —Mark 16:15-16.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. —John 3:16-18.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. —Acts 17:30-31.

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord —Acts 3:19.

but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. —Acts 26:20.

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” —John 3:5-6.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. —Romans 6:3-4.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.—Romans 10:17.

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation . . .—1 Peter 2:1-2.

What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?—James 2:14-20.