

BASICS • Part 6 – Salvation

I. INTRODUCTION • EPHESIANS 2

A. *The Scene*

1. It was just one more execution detail; the Roman centurion had been a part of many
2. As they made their way through the streets of Jerusalem he cursed the fact that they were so crowded with Jewish pilgrims who'd come to celebrate the Passover
3. The detail snaked it's way north and exited the gate that led to the main road
4. Not far from the city walls, with a small hill for a back drop, the three prisoners were relieved of their burdens; the cross-beam of the cross they were soon to be impaled on
5. The cross-beams were affixed to the upright and then the prisoners were thrown roughly to the ground on top of the crosses.
6. Soldiers grabbed their hands and stretched them out; finding the soft place in the wrist between the two bones of the forearm, they drove long metal spikes through the flesh and into the wood
7. Then they grabbed the feet, bent the knees slightly, overlapped the arches of the feet and drove another spike through the feet into the upright.
8. While one set of soldiers hoisted the top of the cross with ropes, others guided the base into a deep hole that had been dug into the ground.
9. Dirt and rocks were sent into the hole to secure the post upright
10. Then the detail backed away to observe their work; three crosses framed against the sky
11. And on those crosses, three men; two thieves and one supposed revolutionary
12. Then the soldiers settled in to wait and watch while the crosses did their work of slow, agonizing torture to death
13. But this afternoon's execution was going to be unlike any they had seen before – and they had seen many.
14. A few hours later, the sky grew rapidly dark; so dark in fact that it was as though the sun had ceased to exist – and there were no stars.
15. It was almost as though nature was hiding it's face from the terrible scene outside Jerusalem.
16. Then an earthquake rent the ground
17. As the light slowly returned, it was clear that the central figure on the cross was in extremis
18. The solders, who had seen many men crucified knew that He was in his last minutes
19. And whereas they were used to hearing cursing and insults hurled from the lips of the executed, this man seemed to be fighting a battle altogether different than one against the nails in his wrists and feet.
20. Finally, a look of peace and victory settled across His face, and he shouted – “It is finished.”

21. As the words escaped Him, He slumped, and it was obvious He was gone.
22. The centurion in charge of the execution detail stood there at the foot of the cross, gazing at the body of before him.
23. He had just witnessed something he had never seen before, and it shock him to his core
24. The rumors he'd heard of this man all suddenly rang incredibly true, and he said, "Surely this Man was the Son of God."

B. What Took Place

1. What took place that day at the hill of Calvary just outside the walls of Jerusalem?
2. Was it just another of thousands of Roman crucifixions, or was this one different?
3. Just as the centurion said – this one was unique!
4. For this one who died on the cross was the Son of God

C. Today – Salvation

1. Last week in part 5 of our Basics series, we took a look at Jesus Christ
2. We considered his dual nature and His present ministry
3. Today we're going to look at His work on the Cross
4. Today, we're considering the subject of *salvation*

II. SALVATION DEFINED

A. What Do We Mean?

1. Christians often talk about "being saved"
 2. One of the most common phrases people think of in connection to Christianity is "Jesus Saves"
 3. But just what does that mean? Saved from what?
 4. You see, this is one of the reasons why many people find no attraction whatsoever to the Christian Faith – they know that Christianity offers *salvation* but they don't perceive any *need* for it
 - a. they enjoy a comfortable existence - have a nice house and loving family; caring friends
 - b. their car gets them to work during the week and the theater on the weekend
 - c. they've got some money in savings; and have never had to go to the hospital
 5. It isn't until the Holy Spirit begins to convict them of their sin that see any *need* of being saved
 - a. my getting lost at Uncle Val's
 - b. salvatuion is for those who are lost – but they must realize they are lost!
-
6. And this is one reason why I am so opposed to the dumbing down of the Faith that is taking place in many churches today.
 - a. as pastors turn away from *preaching the gospel* to giving lite-talks about life-issues, the lost who might be attending are not being shown their real need

- b. in an attempt to avoid offending sinners with the hard news that they're lost, we've virtually guaranteed they will stay that way
- 7. The task of the pulpit is to bring lost sinners to Christ so they can be saved, and then once they are saved, to lead them *on* in their new relationship with Christ.

B. Old Testament

- 1. In the OT, the Hebrew word for salvation is "Ya-sha"
- 2. The root meaning of the word is; roomy, broad, spacious
- 3. It pictures a state of being without unwanted limitations
- 4. As it's used in the OT, it nearly always refers to deliverance *from* bondage *to* freedom, with all the peace and prosperity that freedom brings

C. New Testament

- 1. In the NT, the Greek word for salvation is "Soteria"
- 2. As in Hebrew, it wasn't at all a *religious* word
- 3. It was an everyday word that simply meant *health* and *wholeness*
- 4. In its popular usage it meant "to cure, or recover; to remedy"
 - a. we see it used this way in Matthew 9:22
 - b. this is the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed

Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

- c. the word "well" or in some Bibles, "whole" is the word *soteria*
- 5. Slaves, which were common in the Roman Empire, spoke longingly of being *saved* from their bonds – meaning they hoped to be *redeemed* and set *free*
- 6. This everyday use of the word *salvation* flavored its theological usage so that when we read of salvation in the NT it means to be rescued *from* sin and death, *to* eternal life."
 - a. there is a *from* & a *to* in salvation
 - b. and the eternal life that is the "to" side of salvation isn't merely the far-off promise of heaven in the sweet by and by.
 - c. eternal life isn't just something that we gain after we die and then goes on for ever
 - d. eternal life refers to a *quality* of life that begins the *moment* we are born again
- 7. Listen to how Paul describes this **From** and **To** dimension to Salvation • Ephesians 2:1-6

¹**And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins,**

²**in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,**

³**among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**

⁴**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,**

⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- a. before Christ, we may have existed *physically*, but we were *not really alive*.
 - 1) life is far more than biological or even social existence
 - 2) we are really only alive when we are in relationship with God through faith in Christ
- b. but before that we are out of touch with God; sin stands as a barrier between us and Him
- c. being out of touch with the Author of Life means that we order our lives by the course and conduct of this world
- d. but when we are saved, God gives us *life* and raises us from the place and pattern of death to a new life.

III. HOW CHRIST SAVES US

A. We Cannot Save Ourselves

1. **How** are we saved?
2. What is it that marks the difference between the lost and the saved?
3. First of all we need to understand that we cannot save ourselves.
4. Look again at Ephesians 2:1

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,"

- a. what is a dead person able to do? Nothing!
- b. well, there is one thing they do – they rot, they decay, they smell
- c. and that pretty well defines the lifestyle of the lost; rot, decay, and stink
- d. so, are the lost able to save themselves? No!
- e. why? They're dead!
5. Last week when we were looking at the Dual nature of Christ we saw that He is both God and Man.
 - a. we saw *why* it was essential that Christ became man – to reclaim man's lost dominion
 - b. remember, dominion of earth and been *given* to man, *lost* by man, and could only be *reclaimed* by a man
 - c. but all of Adam and Eve's descendants were disqualified from entering the contest to reclaim man's lost dominion – why?
 - d. because of the Fall, all Adam and Eve's descendants are what? Slaves; slaves of sin and death
 - e. in Romans 6:17 we read . . .

"God be thanked that *though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*"

6. So it's clear, we cannot save ourselves
 - a. we are *dead* in trespasses and sins
 - b. we are *slaves* and possess no right or power to effect any change in our condition

B. The Dilemma

1. Many people have the mistaken idea that salvation comes through good works
 - a. they have the idea that the way to be saved is by endeavoring to compensate for their failure and sin by doing good
 - b. they believe that as long as they do *more* good than bad in their lives, then God will look with favor on them and grant them entrance to heaven
 - c. let's think this through . . .
2. What could a person ever do to merit salvation?
 - a. aren't good works *already expected* of us?
 - 1) indeed, isn't *not* doing a good thing in itself a sin?
 - 2) we cannot compensate for our past failures by doing good simply because doing good is a *requirement* that merits nothing
 - 3) on the contrary, *not* doing good when we know we ought to do it is sin
 - b. how could I ever *make up* for sin?
 - 1) if I tell a lie, what can I do to make up for the lie?
 - 2) tell the truth? No – that can't be it because telling the truth is already required!
 - 3) I know, I need to help a little old lady across the street.
 - 4) is that sufficient to cancel the guilt of the sin of lying?
3. Let me use an illustration here that may help clarify why good works can't save us
 - a. John Smith works for the CIA
 - b. he works in a department that deals in many secrets of national security
 - c. John is a devoted family man and spends many hours with his wife and young children
 - d. he volunteers at the local Boys Club and coaches basketball for inner-city kids
 - e. in fact, he's been able to keep dozens of boys out of gangs, and no doubt saved their lives as a result
 - f. he's polite, and obeys all the laws when driving.
 - g. but for the last 4 years Mr. Smith has been selling secrets of our national defense to agents of Saddam Hussein, who intends to use this information to assassinate the President and rain widespread terror down on the US.
 - h. tell me, what do you think of Mr. Smith?
 - 1) does his work with inner city kids nullify his crime?
 - 2) does his endearing and tender treatment of His family cancel his treason?
 - 3) do his polite manners excuse his actions
4. Friends, sin is nothing less than cosmic treason
 - a. even the smallest sin bears terrible results
 - b. you see, God created this universe perfect
 - c. it wasn't meant to be the scene of sin
 - d. that is why we call the original sin in the Garden of Eden *the Fall*
 - 1) it wasn't just Adam and Eve that Fell
 - 2) creation fell; a curse descended upon the universe

- 3) decay and death began
- 4) and as Paul says in Romans 8, the entire creation was subjected to futility
 - e. the thrones and weeds you see, the trash, the dying plants and flowers; all these things are evidence that the Fall grips the physical universe
 - f. when you drive home today and pass St. John's Medical center up here on Rose, or if you drive by a cemetery, remember that that is there because of the Fall
- 5. Sin is nothing less than cosmic treason – it is selling out to Satan
 - a. sin rips at God's creation
 - b. it introduces a will contrary to God's perfect will
 - c. even what seem like *small* sins bear *terrible* consequences
- 6. We must see that good works could never undo or compensate for our sin
- 7. If we've sinned even once – we've played the part of the Traitor and deserve nothing less than death.
- 8. Now – have we all sinned? Certainly! - Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- 9. If we've all sinned, and cannot save ourselves, what's to be done?
- 10. We need someone who is *untainted* by sin to come and save us.
- 11. This is why Christ came – He came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves – SAVE US!
- 12. That's what the Cross is all about – it's the *place* of our salvation!

C. How The Cross Accomplishes Our Salvation

- 1. There are three main ways the Cross accomplishes our salvation
- 2. The *first* is to see that on the Cross, Jesus was our substitute

Isaiah 53

- 4 **Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.**
- 5 **But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.**
- 6 **All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**
- 7 **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.**
- 8 **He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.**
- 9 **And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.**
- 10 **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.**

- 11 He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.
- 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

- a. Isaiah is so clear here, the Messiah would suffered *in our place*; He would be our substitute
- b. there's a progression of this picture of substitution in the OT
 - 1) when someone would bring an animal to offer to the Lord as a sin offering, the animals was understood to be a substitute for the one offering it
 - 2) the person would lay the hand on the head of the sacrifice and symbolically transfer their guilt to the animal
 - 3) but the picture of sacrifice in the OT is *progressive*: what I mean is, the scope of substitution grows to larger and larger groups of people
 - 4) in the opening chapters of Genesis; when we read of the sacrifices of Adam and Eve and then of Cain & Abel, they were for the *individual*
 - 5) a bit later we read that Noah offered a sacrifice for his *whole family*
 - 6) then Abraham offered a sacrifice for his *household*, which included his family and many servants and their families
 - 7) in Exodus, Moses offered one sacrifice for the *entire nation of Israel*
 - 8) by the time we get to the NT we read that Jesus offered Himself for the sins of what? *The World!* (1 John 2:2)
- c. The book of Hebrews says that all those animal sacrifices were merely *temporary*.
 - 1) they didn't really have the ability to *remove* the sin and guilt of the people who offered them
 - 2) they just *covered* over them until the Messiah would come and provide the sufficient & final sacrifice
 - 3) all those animal sacrifices were like IOU's that people wrote to God, acknowledging their sin and looking to God in faith that He would in His mercy forgive them
 - 4) at the Cross, Jesus gathered all those IOU's and settled accounts with God
 - 5) when He cried out, "It is finished!" it was his victory shout that sin had finally been paid for – all sin, for all history
 - 6) the words "It is finished" are literally = "Paid In Full!"
- d. Jesus took your place and my place on the cross – He was our substitute

3. Second, at the Cross, Christ redeemed us from sin

1 Corinthians 6:20 • For you were bought at a price . . .

Revelation 5:9 • They sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,"

- a. redemption was a well known concept in the world of that time because there were so many slaves
- b. to redeem means to *liberated by a payment*

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

- c. the word *ransom* means “a payment that sets free”
- d. when we read this word we think of the ransom that’s paid to kidnappers
- e. and for that reason many people have been confused by it’s use in reference to Christ
- f. the question they ask is – “Who did Christ pay the ransom *to*?”
- e. but that misses the point
- f. the focus in on the *price*, not who it’s paid to
- g. the idea is that God was fully satisfied by the Cross
 - 1) all of the just penalty of our sins was paid
 - 2) God’s wrath against sin was fully exhausted by Christ’s sacrifice
- h. Oh Christian. Let that calm and settle your heart!
 - 1) no flagellants
 - 2) no self-torment and pain to atone
- i. listen to the words of Isaiah 53 once more . . . (v.11)

He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied

4. Third, at the Cross of Christ, we were reconciled to God

Romans 5:1-2 • Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:10 • For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- a. in Ephesians 2 we saw that before Christ, we are children of wrath – God’s wrath
- b. to be lost in sin means to be under the just condemnation of a Holy god
- c. make no mistake friend – God HATES sin! Passionately, fervently, consistently, and totally!
- d. God is not dispassionate about sin; to Him it is an abomination that deserves nothing less than His hatred and finally, His judgment.
- e. and the worst sin of all is to reject Christ!
- f. before we come to faith in Christ, while God love’s us, He hates our sin,
- g. and as long as we hold on to our sin, then we make ourselves God’s enemy
- h. at the Cross, Jesus acted as the peacemaker between God and man
- i. if we receive Christ, then He becomes the means of being reconciled to God
- j. He stretches out His hand to a Holy yet offended God on one hand, and to lost and needy man on the other
- k. then He brings us together, by removing the thing that’s offensive – our sin.

IV. THE RESULTS OF SALVATION

A. We Have Been Justified

1. Let's conclude this morning by considering just *one* of the many benefits of salvation
(There are several listed in your study sheet – but only have time to consider one this morning)
2. Take a look at 2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3. Here's a wonderful picture of what happened at the cross
 - a. God took our sin and put it on Christ so that when He died, our sin was put to death, once and for all
 - b. then, God took Christ's righteousness, and put it on us
 - c. now, how righteous is Christ? Perfectly righteous!
4. As you stand before God today, in your faith in Christ, He sees you as righteous!
5. Listen to Paul in Romans 3:21-26 . . .

21 "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
25 whom God set forth as a propitiation [atoning sacrifice] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

6. Here's the result of salvation – God declares us Justified!
7. A good definition of justification is "Just-as-if-I'd" never done it
8. How is this justification obtained?
9. In Romans 3 that we just read, how does the Righteousness of God get accrued to our account?
 - a. does it come by works?
 - b. does it come as a result of winning the lottery?
 - c. do we have to sign up for 3 years of MSN or AOL?
10. No! It comes through faith in Jesus Christ!
 - a. what that means
 - b. acknowledge you sin, confess it, admit you are lost and in need of salvation
 - c. Forsake self-effort to commend yourself to God apart from Jesus
 - d. Believe Christ died for YOU!
 - e. and that that was enough

V. CONCLUSION

A. Adam & Christ

1. I want to end this morning with Romans 5:18

"Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift* came to all men, resulting in justification of life."

2. The Fall in the Garden of Eden plunged the entire human race into sin
3. But the Cross opens the door to forgiveness and reconciliation with God
4. The way you and I walk through that door is by *faith in Jesus Christ*
5. Our first birth identifies us with Adam and Fallen humanity
6. Being Born *Again* identifies us with Christ and the New Humanity of those destined for heaven

B. You Cannot Save Yourself

1. You cannot save yourself!
2. If it were possible to earn our own salvation, the Father never would have sent the Son
3. The Cross is proof there is no other way to eternal life
4. What are you counting on when you stand before God?
5. I'm counting on Christ!