

So Great Salvation

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn please to Hebrews, the first chapter. I want you to notice then carefully, the first two verses of Hebrews chapter one, and without delay, without comment; we'll begin reading the first verse of the second chapter. Now, there's a reason, and I'll explain that. The balance of the chapter from verse three on exalts the Lord Jesus above angels; sets Him forth in His character, and in His office above angels. We recognize this and we receive it, but, we are desirous of knowing why. God has, through the book and writer of the book of Hebrews, made this emphasis: that Christ is above angels; and we'll see that in the second chapter.

^{1:1}"God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ^{1:2}Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ^{2:1}Therefore, (and whenever you find a "therefore" in the scripture, don't leave it, until you find out what it's there for, and it's extremely important here) we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, (from the Son)lest at any time we should let them slip. ^{2:2}For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. ^{2:3}How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

Now, the emphasis of this that I read is as follows: The word of angels was steadfast. The commandments they brought, the message they gave. God respected it and it declares that every transgression and every disobedience received a just recompense of reward. God honored the word of angels. God attested the word of angels. If this was true, and it was, how much more ought we expect Him to honor, respect, and confirm the word of His Son? If His Son is infinitely "above all angels" then God would put infinitely more concern to seeing that the word of His Son was respected. Now, notice also: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." Obviously, our temptation would be here to say: "Oh, salvation. That means pardon from sin." You know, the word salvation is an immense word; far greater than we generally associate with it. If you will take that word and trace it through the New Testament, you will find that there are actually four tenses of salvation. Tense in this sense I use the word: there's the "past perfect tense", the "past tense", the "present tense", and the "future tense".

Now, let me explain:

The Past Perfect Tense: "I have been saved! From the pleasure of sin." Repentance.

The Past Tense: "I was saved! From the penalty of sin." Justification.

The Present Tense: "I am being saved! From the power of sin." Sanctification.

The Future Tense: "I shall be saved! From the presence of sin." Glorification.

If somebody comes to you and says, "Are you saved, brother /sister?" You would be quite in order to say, "How do you mean it? I have been saved, I was saved, I am being saved, and I shall be saved. Now let's talk about the one you're interested in." The word 'Saved' has been generally compressed by us to be equivalent to forgiveness, but the word in its use, in the Bible is far larger and far more inclusive than just pardoned. For instance, you'll find Paul saying something like this "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". (Romans 13:11) That sounds very strange.

If He has saved us by His death, how much more shall we be saved, by His life? We find that the word is an immense word. Just as the word sanctification is an immense word. In the mind of God, our sanctification was planned before the world began. It was accomplished at Calvary, and it became ours potentially at the point of repentance. It became ours experientially as we saw ourselves in our union with Christ, and it will be effective throughout the endless ages of eternity.

These are vast words. Immense words. So, when we read in Hebrews 1:3: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;" no one can say: "Well, thank God my sins are pardoned. I haven't neglected salvation." The word here used, includes everything that God, in grace, has done for His people through the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The warning given in this third verse, is not respecting pardon from past sins. It is neglecting anything that the Lord Jesus provided for His people. It thus deals with that heart of indolence that says: "Well, I'd like this from the Lord, but really, I'm not the least interested in anymore." Utterly cutting across this attitude that says: "Well, I'd like to take a certain thing from the sacrifice of Christ, but you see, really, I just don't want to go all the way. I'm not interested in some of these other things."

The word in the first verse is equally explicit: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." Why? Because, there's a tendency to allow precious things, to slip through our hands. Things that are of tremendous value can be easily lost. I had given to my wife before we were married an engagement ring. One day out in Africa, she was taking some weeds out the Zinnias. The ground was muddy, and she was down there working. When she came in; washed her hands, and she found the set in her ring was gone, and she was concerned about it. Now, had she had any thought that the mud was sufficient viscous to have drawn the stone out of the ring, she certainly wouldn't have worn it. So in that little task, that was just in passing, when she was going from one house in the station to another, stooped down, to pick up some weeds, pull them out, put them away and once she came in something that met a great deal to her, was gone. So, it could be, this is implied in the text: becoming concerned about other things, and interested in tasks which are more appealing to us. Truth which was in the eternal mind and heart of God, and purchased, at the tremendous price of the blood of Christ. Just "slips through our fingers", and "slides away" with the common cares of the day. So, we have a warning here: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest, in our preoccupation with many things, this truth, just like sand in our hands, slips through, slides away, and we'd be left with nothing, but regrets."

Again, we see it here: "How shall we escape if we neglect?" It isn't refusal, it isn't rejection, and it isn't a matter of taking one's stand against. It's just the little matter of saying: "Well, another day, another time. There are other things more important, other things more challenging, and other things more demanding of my time and thought", and the question isn't whether or not we will neglect it, the question is this, what are we going to? How are we going to explain it? How are we going to face Him who purchased these priceless privileges, with his precious blood? Included them in His word, and had them expounded to our hearts? And then, we, in our indolence, and in our carelessness, were prepared to just neglect, the things which God purchase by the poured out blood of his only begotten Son. How are we going to escape it? How are we going to escape? This is the question.

Well what are the consequences? You understand of course, that if a person neglects repentance, and neglects faith in Jesus Christ, that they'll be forever in hell. I am confident that in hell tonight, there are multitudes of people that intended someday to repent. I can't for the world, believe, that everyone there, made up his mind at some point of crisis, that he was determined to be lost.

Years ago down in Richmond, Virginia, I was talking a young man who said, "Well, religion is all right for the old. Christianity and salvation is good for people when they're are on their last legs. Anyone as young as I am doesn't want to be saddled with a lot of do's and don'ts, and a lot of religion. So, when I get old enough to take my social security, I'll also take my heaven security, and I'll get along with it then. But right now Sir, don't bother me." And so I said, "Well, what else? What about that?" and he said, "Well, frankly I don't even know that then I'm too interested." I said, "Alright, I'll draw up a contract and have you sign it." So I took a piece of paper that his mother handed me and I drew up such a contract as this: Because I do not know that I'll live to be old enough to take my social security and because I have no certainty of tomorrow and because I have made up my mind that I am NOT going to do anything with Jesus Christ until I get to be at least sixty-five. I hereby relinquish now and forever all interest in the death of Christ and I declare one and the sundry to whom this paper may come, that I refuse here after to consider myself a candidate for salvation. I am determined therefore to go to hell. I have made up my mind that I shall be lost, if lost ness there is the consequence of my action. Because, I am simply not interested in Jesus Christ.

I said, "Would you sign that?" He read it over, his face blanched, the blood drained from it. He said, "No, I wouldn't sign that. Do you think I'm a fool?" I said, "Yes, I do, I actually do because you have essentially signed it by telling us, your mother, your

wife, all of us here that it is your intention to do nothing with Jesus Christ until some point in the indefinite future and there's no reason to suppose that when you reach sixty-five that you won't postpone it again." And so I said, "You might as well get the thing off your mind so that when people trouble you in the future you can say: 'No I settled that, one Sunday afternoon in my mother-in-law's house, I just made up my mind that I wasn't going to be bothered about it anymore.'" I said, "I think that would be the wiser course, rather than just somehow going to do it, in the meanwhile, hardening, case hardening your heart against any work of the Spirit of God." He said, "Mister, you put it to me in a hard way, I don't know what I'm going to do about it but I assure you this I'm going to think more than I have in the past."

Well, it's my conviction that hell is filled with people that have said "someday, someday, someday" and we know that it is fatal to neglect repentance and faith and we have every reason to believe that when we find that word in Thessalonians saying that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ," that it will include that company of people who have just neglected to repent. (II Thessalonians 1:8) Neglected to deal with the issue that was exposed by the gracious love work of the Spirit of God.

So, to sinners we say, "You have an option, you must face Jesus Christ, you have to face Him." God has promised that every knee shall bow to His Son. When the Lord Jesus Christ left heaven and took upon Himself the form of a man, the Father said to him "Every knee of man shall bow to you" and then He gave to man the option as to when they bow. (Romans 14:11) You can either bow now in time, treated by the Spirit of God, worn by the word of God, wooed by the love of God. Bow now in repentance and faith and live or, refuse to bow now, go out of life with your head unbowed and your back unbent and then to meet Jesus Christ, not at the mercy seat as he is now beckoning and waiting, but to meet him at the Great White Throne where He shall be seated in judgment. And where it then be that the books are opened and the Lambs book of life in which the individuals name will not be written and then calling for the rocks and the mountains to fall upon him he will be forced to bow before the Lord Jesus.

Now, listen God promised that every knee would bow to His Son! Now, there either going to bow willingly in repentance and faith and live or, they are going to bow coerced and forced by the majesty of God and the promised that He made to His Son. Then to go out into eternal darkness having acknowledged under pressure what they refuse to acknowledge under grace. This is the tragedy of neglect; this is the crime of neglect in respect to the matter of past sins and the matter of the pardon and justifying love of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we recognize that this is fatal in its consequence and I am sure that they are few here that would challenge that tonight.

Now, then there's another thing that comes along. We somehow have gotten the idea you know, that whereas it is a tremendous importance that we should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and we should accept the salvation that He died to provide, but it isn't nearly as important to take the other things which are included in his death. So, we find that there is a matter of option there. I think it grows out of our misuse of the word saved. I think we have failed to understand that, that word was never intended to be used as we customarily use it. First, I call to your attention that no one in the Bible claimed that he was saved. No one ever said that word; of himself in personal testimony. Paul said, "Who has saved us and called us." (II Timothy 1:9) The word is such an immense word, there would be no point in the pilgrimage that all that the word implied could have been completed by a man living and walking in time. So, no one used it being consistent with the book itself, the Spirit of God just didn't record such a testimony. Paul said, "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me." (Galatians 1:16)

There were others who testified one way and another to the grace of God in their life, but they didn't use that word saved. I think that because we have misused it we've mislead a lot of people, into thinking, that the only thing God is interested in is sort of getting them signed up to occupy a room in the mansion He is building in eternity. As though, God, were afraid that he wouldn't have enough people to fill up the house and so He's just terribly concerned about getting people fixed up with a hell insurance policy and as soon as they have that, then that's all He's really concerned about. Now, some of them He realizes, according to this misconception, maybe a little more enthusiastic and a little more eager and so He puts some challenges for them and if they'll scale the hill He's got a little reward at the top for them and they may be first class citizens and the other second class. But, after all, the important thing is to get people "saved" and then if some want to go on to the deeper life, or the higher life, or the fuller life, or the sanctified life that's up to them. Now brethren I believe this is an utter misconception. I

believe this is not defensible from the Word of God and I believe that it's something that every one of us ought to do our very best to stomp out.

For instance, when John the Baptist was preaching, he never taught in such way at all. For you'll find him saying, "Repent! For there's one coming after me, who's preferred before me, the latch upon whose shoes I am unworthy to loose, He it is that baptizeth you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In other words, John said to his generation "repent" because repentance is the means whereby the barrier between you and God is removed and the end of God's grace is to bring you into fellowship with God. Not simply to take you to heaven. Now here's a misconception that carries along with what we've been discussing. Too many people have felt that God's great purpose in grace was to take us to heaven when we die. Oh, how many things can grow out of the wrong emphasis? God's great purpose in grace is not just to take us to heaven when we die; it is to save us from sin. It is to make us like Jesus Christ and it is to bring us into vital living warm experiential fellowship with Him now during the days of our pilgrimage. Then because he's already brought heaven to us it will be a simple matter for Him to take us to heaven, but, heaven was to begin in our hearts.

Now, I'll say another thing that I think you'll agree with and that is that if God were to take you to heaven, send you to heaven rather, and wouldn't come himself give you a mansion, give you a house right down to the main street of glory right next to the river of life and even give you the franchise to take up the paving in front, the gold paving and sell it to the rest of the inhabitants. God still would have doomed you to hell, if He didn't come there, because, I assure you that heaven cannot consist in a mansion. It can't consist in any of the things which are generally associated with the heavenly abode. The thing that makes heaven heavenly is not the mansion, not the street of Gold, not the river of life and not the harps on which the angels will play. The thing that makes heaven, heavenly is the revelation of God. Without restriction or any inhabitation or anything to obscure Him and if He were to send you to however blissful a situation you can imagine and not come Himself, He would have simply relocate hell and renamed it. For, that which your heart demands is not a place and not things and not a situation. Oh, I can understand how some of the slaves in other days would say, "When we get to heaven we are going to put on our shoes and we are going to walk all over God's heaven." They never had shoes and it gets cold down there and they could imagine that this was going to be a tremendous improvement on their state and I'm sure that God took care of that when they got there but if your concept of heaven is mansions and shoes and so on. Then it is simply a kind of an idea of marrying Mr. Dayton and moving into the department store, so, that you could change your furniture every month and everything else. Oh this is a most sensual concept, this is a materialistic concept.

What we are seeing is that heaven is a place but that which makes the place heavenly is the presence of the King of the place, the Lord of the place, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore God's purpose in grace isn't just to give us a ticket to a place but his purpose is to bring the atmosphere and the government and the blessing of that place to our hearts by bring the person who will make the place heavenly to our hearts. Now, if this is the case then we'll understand that everything that the Lord Jesus provided is important, everything that was included in His cross work was important. You can't sit back and say, "Well, I'm justified, I'm pardoned, I'm forgiven," that is salvation and I have that and I have what he came to bring and I know He's left a few little heights for people to scale one way and another but as far as I am concerned I have the important thing. What is important? Everything is important! Everything He intended! Everything He provided! Everything that was procured by the shedding of His blood and therefore how are we going to escape if we neglect anything that God intended to be ours? Thus there ought to come into every heart, an avid hunger to have all that the Lord Jesus died to make ours. To be all that he intended us to be and to experience everything that was ours.

Let me give you an illustration: suppose dear heart you could be justified and born again and have an attitude of complete indifference to the things of God; and you get home to heaven and the first thing the Lord says is, "Come with me child" and He takes you out to the warehouse of His grace. He throws back the big double doors and there are the deep shelves lined with things that he purchased with His Blood, signed, sealed, packaged and addressed to you; in the various stages of your pilgrimage. Here; here was help when you were sick, here was victory when you were tempted, here was the power of the Holy Spirit when you were entrusted with tasks and as He begins to just point these things out and take the promises that he put in his book and says, "Why didn't you take this? Why didn't you claim this? Here I've made provision for you" and then He gives you a flash back of your life. There you see how you went along broken, went along defeated, went along creeping when

you could have run when you could have mount up with wings as eagles you crawled as a worm in the dust and He says, "See what your life was!" Then He gives you a preview of what your life could have been and there is the cupboard filled with the blessings that he provided with His own blood, purchased for you and you were too indifferent and careless to even want to claim. How are you to escape the heart ache and the grief that comes from realizing that you have robbed the Lord Jesus of the Glory He could have gotten out of your life if you'd cared about the provisions of His love? Stubborn! Hardhearted! Indifferent! Preoccupied! Satisfied with a crumb when you could have had a loaf! And all the time you have been dishonoring him because you have been less than he provided. Less than he expected.

Suppose I were to send my children to school and they were to go with their cloths in tatters, now mind you, they have had some overalls that were well patched that they use when they are climbing trees that we insist that they put them on. But we have managed, along the way, to scrap up pair of shoes on and then so that they don't need to go with their soles flapping and the feet are letting blood on the stones and in the winter time. But, suppose my children should forget completely about the box up on the self, which is a new pair of shoes or the ones in the back of the closet which they use for school and they simply wear these bedraggled old things to school and they wear them all the time and there they go in nothing but rags and tatters. Neglect the food that's put on the table, refuse to eat the provisions that are there, refuse to take all that's given for them and they go out in the community and thus characterizing their Father because it isn't them that is being dishonored, it's their father that's being dishonored. For the father is responsible to provide for his children; and so it is that when the children of God spurn the provisions of God's grace and neglect that which He is given, they are actually shaming their heavenly Father. They're dishonoring him, because here were provisions of love that in His infinite wisdom He knew His people needed. In order that being strengthened and helped and encouraged and delivered they could walk in the presence of a skeptical world and by their walk and their attitude of demeanor and expression and their victory and their joy and their peace, they could honor their Father. But, they were unwilling to dress in the cloths that he provided, to wear the shoes that he gave, unwilling to eat the food that he provided and they skimped along on what they had and all the while they dishonored him.

What are you going to do about it dear child of God, if and when, you get home to heaven you discovered that though you made it by the skin of your teeth yet, every step of the way you dishonored the Father that loves you and whom you profess to love by simply neglecting the provisions of his love and the provisions of His grace. Can you see of the tremendous importance that's attached to the text? Well, you say, "If God wanted me to have these things wouldn't He force them on me?" Well I think not. God has given us promises and we are by these exceeding great and precious promises made partakers of the divine nature and you see He has told us that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that which we have heard, lest that at any time we should let them slip. Because the god of this world is trying to make these things seem unimportant and the pressure of occupation is trying to make us seem too busy with other things to give our time here and we seem to get along to well without some of the things which are set forth in the Word and then we meet someone who claims to have these things and they don't seem any different than we are so we say, "What's the use? What's the value?" and the net result of it is that before we know what's happened we've just let them slid through our hands, we've let it slip away and consequently we have robbed the Lord Jesus Christ of what he had a right to expect from us.

Now what is this great salvation? What does it include? What did our Lord have to say? It's this that is a tremendous concern to all of us, tonight. I think we will see it if we take the Word. Now on another visit I have given you this message, but I give it just in review because I want you to see it. I'd like to have you remember now and review with me what the Spirit of God has recorded for us of the ministry of Our Lord. For it says here: "...Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord..." (Hebrew 2:3) What did the Lord have to say about this so great salvation? Well, if we turn to Matthew 5 and verse 20 we will have the beginning statement and if you would like to record these; it might be helpful to you in the future and well add this word that will be the key, you'll hear it, for our Lord is speaking to a company of people on the most important subject in the world. This is what He says: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

What was their righteousness? It was the righteousness that a dedicated mind and a consecrated intellect could produce without the Holy Spirit. They fasted, they tithed, and they prayed, they abstained from eating meat, they observed holy days, they memorized scripture, they were enthusiastic in talking about their religion and all of these things can be done without the

Holy Ghost. All of this can be done. You can be orthodox in your theology, you can evangelistic in your zeal, and you can missionary in your fervor, you can be devout in your practice, you can fast, you can tithe, you can pray; you can do all of these things and do it with the natural energy with which previously, you served the devil. So, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "The righteousness which prepares you for heaven, is not that which you produce by your energy but it is that which is produced in you, by another source entirely. It is that righteousness which is from above. It is the work of God in you." And so this is something He has to say about salvation.

The second thing we find that He is saying is in Luke 13th chapter verses three and five. Here, He speaks to this wonderful subject again, our great salvation and he tells us twice, in these two verses that, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Have you repented, or have you neglected it? How are you going to escape, for He has declared that except you repent you'll perish. We've defined repentance as a change of mind, of intention and purpose; from pleasing self to pleasing God. For in it is the seed of all righteousness and all holiness. As a sinner your purpose was to please yourself and your direction was aimed that way. Then, you came to the place of repentance. You made a right about face, a complete turn and from that moment on, your intention was to please God and your purpose was to glorify God and the end of your being was his satisfaction. Not you're being satisfied with Him but His being satisfied with you. Now, have you repented? Except you repent you'll perish you see the fatality of neglect here, you can see how important it is that you shouldn't overlook this. Well come with me then to Matthew chapter 18 and verse 3, for here we find our Lord speaking about something else. He's been out walking with his disciples and they've been arguing as to which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord called a little child, set the child on his knee and turned to his disciples and said: "Except you be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The word converted means turned again, and our Lord is saying that though they've repented, though they've received him; the evidence of the genuineness of his work in their hearts is that every time their mind is in conflict with His mind, His mind prevails. Thus, you'll find it stated in Romans 12:1-2, verse 2 especially: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," There it is that many of the things that you carried in this life of forgiveness and pardon, were not ordained of Him, nor were they according to His will and so, at every step of the pilgrimage you're going to find that some attitude is in conflict with what He proscribes. The evidence of the genuineness of His work is that every time you find that your way is in conflict with His way, His way prevails and you're turned again. Perhaps, you're going this way, He's allowed you to go this way, but all of the sudden and the Spirit of God stops you and says, "You can't go that way." The evidence that you're a child of His is that you follow Him, that you turn again and go His way. A constant attitude of rectification. It's like driving; you have to decide which town you're going to. Suppose you were leaving today for my town back in the east, in New York City. First thing you have to head right. Don't go west it is such a long way around. But, even after you have decided to go east, don't just lock your wheels and step on the gas; you'll be in trouble. Because after you've decided to go to New York and you've headed east, you have to make many minute corrections, because, if your car is riding along the road and there's a slant of the road and you have to correct against this slant and so, there's a bent in your disposition and a bent against your nature and your purpose to please God. But, the evidence of the genuineness of His work is that whenever the car begins to drift, away from His will, you bring it back again! You keep bringing it back again, because, your purpose is to please and you're not going to allow a drift to pull you into the ditch.

You see? Except you be converted, and become as a little child. It's the attitude of constant correction to the will of God and continuous concern that you please Him. Not simply that some place in the past you made a transaction and signed a decision card, but today, the attitude of your heart is: "I want to please God!" and if He shows you that some action, some attitude, something you're doing that doesn't please Him, you don't rest in the past. You aren't simply resting there; you're saying "Lord I want to please you today! As much as that day back there when I first met you" and you have a continuous attitude, toward His will.

Then, we come to something else. If we turn please to John the sixth chapter, we'll find a statement. Let's turn first to John the third chapter and we'll see there that our Lord had something to say about this great salvation. You'll hear three times in as many verses, He says something about it. In verse three He says: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of

God.” In verse five He says: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” and in verse seven He says: “Ye must be born again.”

So, our Lord Jesus has made it expressly clear that that which prepares us for salvation is not something that we’ve done toward God, but something that God has done toward us. Oh there’s something you must do toward God. You must repent and you must believe, but the evidence of the genuineness of your repentance and your faith isn’t that you can remember when you repented and when you believed, but the evidence of the genuineness of your repentance and your faith, is that when you repented and believed God regenerated you by the Holy Ghost and gave you the witness of the Spirit that you’d passed from death to life. And you knew you had been born again.

Now, this is a point of tremendous, tremendous significance. How are we going to escape if we neglect it? You can’t get by, He said: “Except a man be born again, except a man be born of the Spirit, except you must be born again” and you can see how fatal it is to neglect at this point and so, it’s a tremendous importance that you should make absolutely sure, that you repented, that your righteousness is not the righteousness produced by men; by effort. But, it’s the righteousness that’s produced by God through the sovereign and the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Oh it’s a tremendous thing, this salvation.

Now then, we come onto something else. If you’ll go to John the sixth chapter and the fifty-third verse. Here He is talking to a company of people, that were going to make Him king and they were going to be His disciples and we find that they’ve asked Him however, for a certification, to do a miracle, predict it, have it come to pass, to prove that He was who they thought He was and who He said he was. Our Lord Jesus said: “I am the bread of life: I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

You see salvation is not in a plan, salvation is not in scripture verses, and salvation is not in ordinances and all the scheme of theology, salvation is not in decision, salvation is not in a pronouncement of an evangelist, or a pastor, or a teacher. Salvation is a person. This is the cardinal truth of our faith. Salvation isn’t from a person only, it is, but salvation is a person. David saw this in Psalm 27:1 “Jehovah is my light and my salvation;” again we have it: “He that hath the Son, hath life, life is in the son, he that hath not the son shall see life but the wrath of God abideth upon him.” You understand therefore, that salvation is Christ. He is our light, He is our salvation. He didn’t die to send it, He died to become it and He isn’t just some Savior because He’s in heaven, it has to be in you. Now, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in the second letter the thirteenth chapter and the fifth verse and said: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, know that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

So, it isn’t just Christ on the cross, or Christ in the tomb, or Christ raised from the dead on the throne, but it is Christ in us, in you, the hope of Glory. So, He said that to have life was to have him become so united with you, that it was as though you’ve eaten His flesh and drunk His blood; He has become the life of your life, bone of your bone, He’s joined himself to you and you’ve received Him. Because, salvation isn’t just from Him; salvation is in Him and when He is in you, then He is your life. Now, this is the testimony of the word and how important it is therefore, that you shouldn’t miss heaven by eighteen inches. Multitudes of people are going to do that. Our evangelical churches are filled with people that are going to miss heaven by eighteen inches. Because, all their salvation is up here in their mind and it never got down here in their hearts where Christ became their life. They have the verse, but they don’t have him.

Years ago down in Tennessee in a service on a Sunday morning, invitation is given, a man came forward, a personnel worker with a card and a snap board came to see him.

He said, “What did you come for?”

“I came to be saved”

He said, "What do you want to be saved from?"

He said, "I didn't know there was a choice. Sin and hell I guess"

He said, "All right! Are you a sinner?"

He said, "Yes, or I wouldn't be here."

The personnel worker opened his Bible and he said, "Read that".

The man read: "He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son shall not see life."

He said, "Oh, do you believe it?"

"Yes, I believe it."

And so he said, "What is your name? What is your address? What is your telephone number? Now do you want to be baptized?"

The man said, "Well I don't know, I guess so, I suppose so."

"Do you have any questions?"

He said, "Yes, there is a question. I just read that verse: 'He that hath the Son hath life' and I told you I believed it and that's true but, there's just one question: How do you get the Son?"

"Oh, he said, 'don't worry about that, that isn't important, we'll take care of that in one of the Sunday school classes. The important thing for you to know now is that you believe it.'" So they signed his name to the card and ten minutes later he was being baptized. The personnel worker came to a pastor friend of mine and said, "You know I've been a little bit troubled about that. That fellow believed that verse alright, but I've just been thinking, maybe we ought a do a little more than we do because it isn't just to have the verse that says 'He that hath the Son hath life,' because life isn't in the verse. Life is in the Son. I have been wrong about that?" and my pastor friend said, "Oh, my dear brother you've been so wrong. You've been so wrong, you've been so wrong."

So, multitudes of people in that day are going to hear Him say, "Away with you, for I never knew you!!" (Matthew 7:23) Because, they said "Lord, Lord" but, they've never come to the place where they truly repented and truly received Him and He had become the flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone and life of their life, and all they had was the word. All they had was the verse and salvation isn't a verse. Salvation is a person and that person, in vital relationship with you. Can you see how important it is that we don't neglect? That we should be among that number in that day that will hear Him say, "Away with you, I never knew you." They knew Him, they knew the right things to say, the right places to go, the right things to do, but He'd never come in and salvation is in a person and you agreed with this and we can understand that.

However, we don't stop there. Turn to John chapter twelve and verse twenty-four. Our Lord Jesus Christ is continuing to minister to us and so it's in this particular occasion, in verse twenty-three previously a group of Greeks have come and said: "Sir, we would see Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; but he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

This great salvation doesn't only include salvation from the penalty of sin; it doesn't only include Christ our life; that He delivered us from death by becoming our life. He said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me and where I am there shall also my servant be." (John 12:26) Where did the Lord Jesus go for us? He went to the cross. He went there in our place and in our stead, He was there, crucified for us. As a corn of wheat; He was prepared to fall into the ground and die. Knowing that if He

did not, He would abide alone, but were He to die as His Father had sent Him into the world, for that hour and that purpose. He would bring forth much fruit. But, He said, it isn't just a cross for me. Four times in the ministry of our Lord He mentioned the word cross; in Matthew 10:38 He said: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

In Mark 10:21 He said to rich young ruler: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

In Matthew 16:24 He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

In Luke 14:27 He said: "And whosoever doth not bear His cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

The only four times the Lord Jesus mentioned the word cross, as such, was in reference to his disciples. At the very outset He said, this is the condition for coming to Me. It is as though you were to say, you're at Bethany Fellowship. The only possible way that anyone can become a member at Bethany Fellowship, is to go to the gallows, have the rope put around your neck, the trap door sprung and your life utterly taken away from you, and when they've taken you down from the gallows, slip the rope off your neck and your cold in death; then you're a candidate for Bethany Fellowship. It was as though we were to say; in The Gospel Tabernacle in New York City, that no one can become a member of that church until they've gone up to Sing Sing. They've gone into that little room that's set aside for criminals under capital punishment. They've had the electrode put around the forehead, around the hands and the feet and the power has been turned on and they've been electrocuted, and then is that when they've been taken out of that room and laid out and stretched their candidate for membership. It was just this shocking, when the Lord Jesus Christ used these words in this context. His people couldn't understand it. Do you want to know what he said? "If any man take not up his cross, and come follow me, he cannot be my disciple."

We find, that this great salvation does not only include: salvation from sin, salvation from hell, but it also includes: salvation from the world. In which we've lived, that's governed us and controlled us, whose attitudes, whose maxims, whose rewards we've sought and whose interests we've served. It not only includes salvation from the world, it also includes salvation from the flesh. From our own personality and nature, traits and interests. It includes salvation from those habits and attitudes that we've developed and acquired. It not only includes salvation from the world and the flesh, but, it also includes salvation from the devil. We were his bond slaves, we'd given him control of our life, and it had been done for us by the father of the race, but, it had been confirmed by us, by our own choice, at the age of accountability and we were then children of the devil. He was our father, we were his children, and his nature we exhibited and his acts we preformed and his government we accepted, but, we come to Jesus Christ and his purpose not only to save us from hell and save us from sin, but it is to save us from the world. Its government and its interest and its control. It's to save us from the flesh, with its pull and its hold and its snaring and meshing pull around us. It's to save us from the devil, with all of his power and all of his cunning and all of his craftiness.

The Lord Jesus died therefore, to set his people free. For whom the Son makes free, is free indeed. Free from the fear of death. Free from the fear hell. Free from the power of the world. Free from the power of the flesh and free from the power of the devil. This was all part of his great salvation. Now, can you see the folly of a person saying, "Well, I don't want to go to hell when I die: but I'm quite content to be in bondage to the world. To its aims, to its goals, to its interests, to its rewards and to engage in its service." Well can you see how silly, how foolish, how ridiculous it is for a person to say, "I don't want to go to hell. I want to go to heaven. But, I'm quite content to go on being in bondage to my own personality. I've got a mean, ugly disposition you see. Oh I loose my temper, I get terribly mad but I'm quite content to go on shamming Christ and characterizing Christ you see because really all I wanted out of Christ was to escape from hell."

Can't you see what a total contradiction this is? Can't you see how foolish it is for a person to say, "Well, you see, I was quite willing to go on doing the business of the devil. I'm willing to be a fifth columnist for hell and because I've already been secured against the burning. I won't have to go hell when I die and so I don't care if I do serve the devil a little bit, it's all right." Can't you see what a total contradiction of terms this is? How unthinkable it is? And no wonder the writer of Hebrews says, "How can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?!!!" When Gods salvation intended deliverance. Not only from the penalty of our sin and from the certainty of hell. But it's included deliverance from the power of the world, its grip and its hold on us. It included deliverance from the power of the flesh, the personality, and the nature and the traits of the individual. It included

deliverance from the power and console of Satan himself and the demons of darkness. Now, for a person to say, "Well, all I really want from Christ is to go to heaven anyway." Why it's unthinkable!!! It's inconceivable!!! It can't be it just can't be. That anyone can spurn the grace of God and mercy of God and the love of God manifested in the death of His Son to set His people free and go on in bondage. When He's already paid the price of their deliverance.

They tell about a man, out in the western part of Mississippi in a little rural town, way back up the river, that had a large plantation and many, many slaves. Somebody came around to the slaves and said that the Emancipation Proclamation has been signed. So they went to the owner and said, "Now what does that mean?" He said, "That means I can't sell you to anybody else. It means that from now on I just can't sell you. It's utterly impossible for me to sell you, the government said I can't sell you." "Well, what does that mean?" they asked. He said, "Well, that means you just go right on ahead and work here and you don't need to be the least bit afraid. You just work for me and go right on working for me and I'll never sell you, I'll never sell you. You can stay right here." So, one year went on, two years went on. They kept living in the slave quarters, they kept going to the field, and eating the food, taking the lash of the overseer. Just going right on, and they said, "Isn't wonderful to be emancipated. We don't have to be so feared about being sold, our families won't be broken up and surly we can live right here with your daddy and your mommy all your life. We'll go right on working for the master here," and so they go right out into the field and grovel and serve and they were talking about being emancipated. Cause they couldn't be sold to anyone else. Then, someone came along and said, "What are you doing here?" "Well, we are emancipated; we don't need to be afraid about being sold anymore." "Listen, you don't understand what emancipation is. You don't need to serve that man anymore. He doesn't own you. He not only can't sell you, but he can't work you. You don't have to do his dirty bidding anymore. You can leave here, pack your things and go down the road and go anywhere you want to go." "Well, he never told us that, that's what it meant to be emancipated. So, we've spent four years working here, when we didn't have to."

Oh listen, I know children of God. That have been four years, doing the bidding of the world and longer than that doing the bidding of the flesh, and longer than that being hounded and whipped by the devil. They never heard that Jesus Christ died to set them free. Oh, to think that when they've heard. They'll go right on, in bondage. That's unthinkable, that's unthinkable. And so, if I speak to you and you've had bondage to the world that's been gripping and pulling, the Lord Jesus died to set you free. He carried you with Him to the cross; so, that as you went down into death the world would have to relinquish its hold. It couldn't follow you into death. He carried you with Him to the cross so that as you went with Him into death; the flesh couldn't hold you and govern you anymore. He carried you with Him so that the devil couldn't hold you anymore, and then He brought you up on the other side of the grave, with Him. In newness of life, so that you could walk in free. For he that is dead is free from sin. Can you go on neglecting so great salvation? You can't, you've got to admit your bondage, admit your need, and admit that you've been serving when you didn't have to serve and come and throw yourself at His feet and gladly take from his nail pierced hand the deliverance that He purchased with His blood. Because, you've heard about it, you heard about it and you'll know that He died to set you free. He set you free.

Years ago an Englishman, had gone out to California. Made his fortune in the gold fields and he wanted to go back and live with his own people. So, he sent his money by check around; back to England and he came overland to Kansas City and down in Missouri and then in Mississippi and ended up in New Orleans where he was going to take a ship to New York and from there to England. Now, as a tourist in New Orleans he did as most tourists do; he went down to the slave market. Only then, in the early 1850's, there were still slaves being sold and as he went into the market he saw a lot of men gathered there and one young Negro woman who was very beautiful was up for bid. He heard the men as they were speaking about her. He saw two evil looking men bidding for her, quite heatedly, and then he heard them say what they would do with her and his heart just revolted against the whole swinish thing. Finally, when they were bidding and the prices were getting very high and he just couldn't stand it. So, he beckoned to the auctioneer and he said a figure which was exactly twice the last bid, utterly beyond anything that had ever been paid for a slave in that market before.

The auctioneer said, "Have you got the money?" Then he came up and said, "Yes, I've got the money." So, the bill of sale was made out, he went over to the block to take the woman that he purchased, and as she came down one step and stood just about level with his eyes, she had made a mouthful of spittle, and she spat right full in his face, and hissed through her clenched teeth, "I hate you." He said nothing; with the back of his hand he whipped the spittle away. Then, he took her by the

hand, walked down the street, across this intersection, through the mud and down that street. Until, he came to a little office building. She couldn't read and didn't know what it was. He went to the desk, began to speak, the man behind the desk began to protest. He said I insist it's the law, I insist. Finally, he came back paid some money and got a paper. He walked over to the woman, that was like a beast ready to spring on him, and he handed the paper out and he said, "Here, here are your manumission papers. You're free." She still hissed, "I hate you." He said, "Didn't you understand? Here are your manumission papers, you're free." She said, "No, you paid twice as much for me as they've ever paid for anybody on that block. Now, you are giving me my freedom? I don't believe you." He said, "Yes, these are your manumission papers," and he put them in her hand. She said, "Stop, Mister, do you mean to say that you bought me to set me free?" He said, "Yes, that's why I bought you. To set you free." Tears came up into her eyes, that hadn't known tears for a long time. They just spilled over, her face softened, and then she slipped down on her hands and knees, and she reached down and put her hands on those rough minors boots and then laid her cheek down on the toe of one of them and through her tears she sobbed; "Oh, you bought me to set me free, you bought me to set me free. You paid more than has ever been paid before, just to set me free." Then, she through her tears she looked and said, "Oh sir, all I want in life, is to be your slave. You bought me, to set me free."

Listen, the Lord Jesus Christ bought you. To set you free, and when you understand that, then it's the joy of your life. To come, and stand against the door of grace and let Him bore through the ear of your heart that you can be His bond slave forever. He bought you. He bought you! To set you free. Not only from hell, but from the world and the flesh and the devil. He bought you! To set you free. Oh come to Him, kiss His nail pierced feet, and take from His hand the great salvation that He purchased with His blood and remember: He bought you! To set you free. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at Bethany Fellowship, Bloomington, MN, by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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