

When Is A Person Saved?

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Acts 16:13-31

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Most of you are familiar with the story of the Philippian jailer, the question he asked of the apostle Paul and the reply which Paul gave to him. But I will read it again for you. It is found in Acts 16 verse 30 and 31. And it says he brought them out. That is the Philippian jailer brought Paul and Silas out of jail and he said to them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

Now my subject today is, "When is a Person Saved?"

He asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" S-A-V-E-D.

And Paul and Silas replied, "Believe. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

I tell you what gave birth to this message. Not so very long ago a television listener from far away, out in the Midwest called me and we talked a while about the message that I am preaching, the gospel that I am preaching. And in the course of the conversation he asked me this question. He said, "What would you tell a person who is in doubt of his salvation? What would you say to a person who told you that he didn't know whether he was saved or not?"

Now, I know he was talking about himself. And I replied, "Well, I would have to give it some thought. It would depend on the individual." But I thought much about that question and I realize this is a problem that is faced by many people today.

"I am not sure if I am saved. Am I saved? Do I know the Lord?"

Like John Newton wrote that hymn years ago that goes something like, "Do I love the Lord or no? Am I his or am I not?"

Well, I have concluded after giving much thought to that question, I have concluded that the way to deal with this problem is to get to the root of the matter, this doubts and fears about salvation, whether or not a person is saved.

And the way to deal with it is get to the root of the matter. Now the reason that a lot of people are not sure whether they are saved or not, a lot of the reason...the reason why a lot of people are in doubt about their salvation is because many of them do not know what salvation is. And if you do not know what salvation is then it is very possible you don't know whether or not you are saved. So I feel like that I can help many people today by telling you what salvation is and let you determine yourself whether or not you are saved. What is salvation?

I am going to give you...I am going to give you six statements. Now you think about this. When is a person saved? Well, that can be answered if we find out what salvation is, what it is.

All right here is the first one. Now Jonah said in Jonah two verse nine, "Salvation is of the Lord." It is a work of God. It is something God does for us. Salvation is not something we do for God. Salvation is something God does for us. Salvation is of the Lord.

And David wrote in Psalm chapter three verse eight, "Salvation belongeth to the Lord." It is his work.

In fact, one of David's most often used phrases is this, "The God of salvation." He is the God of salvation.

So what is salvation? Well, first, it is of the Lord. So if salvation is of the Lord then a person is saved when God is pleased to save him, if it is a work of God, if it is something God does for us, if salvation is of the Lord and of him only then I am saved when God is pleased to do a work of grace in my heart, when God is pleased to save me.

You see, that is the way that the apostle Paul described his experience. That is the way he described his salvation in Galatians three verse 15. What did he say? "But when it pleased God, but when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen."

Now Paul tells you in Philippians that he was brought up in religion. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. He tells you that he was brought up in the school of religion. He sat at the feet of the greatest theologian of his day, Gamaliel. He tells us by his own testimony that he was zealous and he was moral and he was very successful for exceeded many his equals. He tells us by his own testimony that he held high office, but he also tells us that he was unsaved. He didn't know God.

So here, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, when it pleased him he revealed his Son in me." God did it. So a man will be saved when God operates on his heart, when God regenerates him, when God calls him, when God is pleased to open his ears to hear and open his eyes to see and open his heart to believe."

Ephesians chapter two tells us that in verse eight. "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. It is not of works lest any man should brag or boast. But we are his workmanship. We are God's workmanship." We are not the workmanship of the evangelist or the pastor or some human being. Salvation is not of the will of the flesh. It is not of the will of man. It is of God. We are born of God.

So when is a man saved? Well, if salvation is of the Lord he is saved when God saves him, when God operates on his soul and mind and heart and brings him to believe on Christ. Faith is the gift of God.

Repentance is the gift of God. "Don't you know," the apostle wrote, "that the goodness of God led you to repentance?" When was Abraham saved? When God called him? When was Zacchaeus saved? When Christ called him. When was Matthew saved? When Christ called him. When was the apostle Paul saved? When God met him on the road to Damascus and called him.

Over in Philippians 1:6, listen to this. "Being confident of this very thing that he that hath begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Who is going to finish the work? The same one who started it, God almighty. He began a good work, a saving work, a heavenly work, a holy work in you. There is the key word, in you. God revealed his son in me. He began a work in me. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He will complete that work having begun that work.

Romans five verse five says this. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Who gave him? The Father gave him. So when is a person saved? The person will be saved when God calls him, when God calls him, when God works in his soul, gives him an ear to hear, an interest in the gospel, a desire for Christ.

All right, second. Stay with me. When is a person saved? What is salvation? It is of the Lord.

Secondly, salvation is for the lost. It is for lost people. It is for sinners. Listen to Luke 19 verse nine and 10. Let our Lord...let our Savior himself define what salvation is. He says this. You know about Zacchaeus, you know. Well, when the Lord came under the tree and looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down. This day I am going to your house."

And Zacchaeus came down there.

This is what the Lord said. "This day is salvation come to this house for he also is a son of Abraham for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Zacchaeus was a publican. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Zacchaeus was regarded by people of his nation as a traitor, a publican.

They used to say back in those days if there is two men, one is a Pharisee, one is a publican, the Pharisee will go to heaven and the publican will go to hell. Publicans and sinners notorious people.

But our Lord said, "This thing of salvation is for sinners. It is for the lost. I came to seek and to save the lost."

Well, if salvation is for the lost and the Lord came to save the lost then a person will be saved when he becomes lost. He will be found when he is lost. He will be saved when he is lost.

You ask me. "Have I been saved?"

I ask you. "Have you ever been lost?"

If you have never been lost you have never been found.

You ask me. "Have I been saved?"

Well, I ask you. "Have you ever been a sinner?"

Christ died for sinners. When you...have you ever been without hope, without help, without God in this world needing salvation?

We know the publican was saved. You know the one that went to the temple and cried, "Oh, God, be merciful to me the sinner?"

He saves sinners and he saved that sinner. The other man was a Pharisee and he boated of what he had done. He boasted of his morality and his works, his goodness and his righteousness. And Christ said he went home unregenerated, unjustified. But the publican who was a sinner...

"Have I ever been saved?"

The question is have I ever been lost?

"Have I ever been saved?"

The questions is have I ever been a sinner?

That's true of the thief on the cross. What did he say to the other man when they were mocking the Savior? He said, "Don't you fear God? Seeing we are in the same condemnation and we, indeed, justly. We are getting what we deserve.

"Lord, you are coming into a kingdom. Remember me. Remember this old sinner."

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.” He saves sinners. And that is the only kind of people he saves.

He told the Pharisees that. They said to his disciples, “Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners?”

And Christ said, “The well, the well do not need a doctor. The well do not need a physician, but they that are sick. You go learn what that means. I will have mercy and no sacrifice. I am not come to call the righteous. I am come to call sinners.”

So when is a man saved? When it pleases God.

When is a man saved? When he is lost, when God reveals to him he is a sinner, when God strips him and breaks him and crushes him and puts him in the dust and he realizes, “I am lost. Lord, save me. I am lost.”

All right, thirdly, thirdly. What is salvation? It is to see the glory of God. It is to see the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

So a person will be saved when he sees the glory of God, the true redemptive glory of God.

Now listen. 2 Corinthians four, listen, verse five. “For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” that is talking about the original creation when darkness was upon the face of the deep and God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light and the whole universe was bathed in light and the darkness fled away and the glory of God was revealed.

Now God who commanded that light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, in the darkened hearts of dead depraved sons of Adam, shined in the hearts of sinners, lost sinners to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

What is this glory of God? Well, it is the glory that Moses desired to see in Exodus 33. Moses who had seen the dividing of the sea, the death of the first born, all these mighty miracles of Egypt. But he said, “Lord, show me your glory. Show me your greater glory. Show me the glory that is your chief glory.”

And Gods aid, “Moses, hide in the cleft of the rock and I will make my glory, my goodness pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I am going to save sinners. I am going to show mercy, not sell it. It is not mercy if you sell it. I am going to show mercy to whom I will and be gracious to whom I will. My glory I am going to show my glory.”

God's redemptive glory. Our Lord spoke of it in John 17. He said, "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Glorify thou me."

Then he said, "I finished the work you gave me to do. I have finished the work."

It is his finished work. It is the glory the angels spoke about on the mountain to the shepherds when they said, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to men. We bring unto you good tidings. Unto you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord."

God's glory is in saving sinners by his mercy through his Son. God's glory is the fulfillment of his holiness, the satisfaction of his justice and the revelation of his wisdom. How can God be just and justifier? That is seen in Christ. How can sinners be clean before God? That is seen in Christ. How can he that is born of a woman be righteous? That is seen in Christ. There is where the glory of God is seen, in the face of Christ Jesus.

Christ became a man, perfectly obeyed God's law, went to the cross of Calvary and died under the wrath of God for our sins, was buried and rose again and ascended to the right hand of God. And we see in him God's greater glory, God's redemptive glory.

And Christ said this. "This is the will of him that sent me that of everyone that seeth the Son, seeth the Son and believeth on him might have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day."

When is a man saved? When he sees the redemptive glory of God in Christ, not in the Church, in Christ, not in the ordinances, in Christ, when he sees that in Christ God can be just and justifier. In Christ God almighty's righteousness is perfectly fulfilled and God's justice is satisfied. And not only at the cross is his love revealed, but his truth is revealed, not only his mercy, but his justice and righteousness. And we see that in Christ. That is when a man will be saved, when he sees the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Have you seen it? Do you know how God can be just and justifier? In Christ.

All right, fourthly. What is salvation? Now listen. It is to be in the kingdom, in the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in the kingdom of Christ.

Now, listen to Colossians 1:13. "He hath delivered us." The word "salvation" means deliverance. To save is to deliver. Almost every time the word "salvation" is used, it is to deliver, deliver. "He hath saved us. He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, the power of Satan and sin, the curse of the law, the power of principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world. He has delivered us from their lordship and their power and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, of the Son of his love."

Christ is king of his kingdom. He is Lord of his family and those whom he saves bow to his lordship. So a person will be saved when he bows to Christ as Lord and master. That's right.

Now this is a point that needs to be stressed, especially in this day, now. This is a day of much religion and little commitment. This is a day of a lot of talk and very little commitment and very little spirituality. This is a day when many people claim to have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, but they have not bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and master.

Now listen. What is salvation? It is to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness and translate us into another kingdom under new management, under another master. Satan was our master. Evil was our Lord. Sin...we were servants of sin. Now we are servants of Christ. He is the king. He is the Lord. He is the master. As you once were in bondage to sin, you are now married to Christ. He is the head. He is the Lord. He is the master.

He said to his apostles, "You call me Lord and Master. You say well. So I am."

He died that he might be Lord. No man can serve two masters. I ask you this question.

You say, "Am I saved?"

Who is your master.

"Am I saved?"

Who is your Lord?

"Christ is my Savior."

I didn't ask you who your savior was. I said, "Who is your Lord?" He is not your Savior if he is not your Lord.

"Am I saved?"

For whom do you live? No man can serve to masters. He will bow to one. He will bow to one or to the other. If Christ is your Lord when you marry you will marry someone who loves Christ. He is your Lord. You wouldn't displease him, would you? He is considered in all things. If Christ is your Lord when you establish a friendship or a partnership it will be with someone with whom he is pleased, who knows him, who loves him. You wouldn't dare establish a partnership with someone who hated your Lord, would you? Hated your master? He is your master.

If Christ is your Lord you will enjoy his Word. You will enjoy his presence. You will enjoy his gospel. You will enjoy his house. You will enjoy his people if he is your Lord, if he is your master, if you are married to him. If Christ is your Lord your chief desire will be to please him and this will control the way you treat others, the way you regard possessions, the way you regard this world, the way you regard this world, the way you regard the praise and popularity and the wealth of this world if Christ is your Lord.

If he is your Lord you will live and work and fellowship where...in the place where you can fellowship with other believers and where you can have a pastor, where you can attend and hear the word of God preached.

You see, Paul said this. "I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live. Yet not I. Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in this flesh I live by and for the glory of God. The world is crucified unto me and I am to the world."

So what is salvation? It is to be brought out of a kingdom of darkness and be translated into a kingdom of God's dear Son. Thomas called him, "My Lord and my God, my master, my sovereign ruler, ruler." He is not a fire escape to keep me out of hell. He is not an insurance policy to grab hold of before I die. He is...runs my life and rules my life and controls my life if I am saved, if I am his.

"No man can be my disciple unless he takes up his cross and follows me," Christ said.

Fifthly, salvation is peace. It is rest. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God," peace with God and the peace of God. Our Lord said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

I tell you. In this religious world it is anything but peace. It is a warfare it is unsettled, it is the heart of most people is like the troubled sea. But Christ said, "Come and I will give you rest."

Now salvation is peace and rest in Christ. Then people are saved when they cease from their labors and cease from their works and enter into his rest.

Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot he has taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul. I am contented, at peace and rest."

My sins, oh the bliss of that glorious thought, my sins not in part, but the whole are nailed to the cross and I bear them no more, praise the Lord, it is well with my soul.

"Come unto me. I will give you rest." Peace.

And Paul said, "In whatsoever state I am, I am content, content with beholding his face, my all to his pleasure resigned. No changes of season or place would make any change in my mind. While blessed with a sense of his love, a palace a toy would appear and prisons would palaces prove if he would dwell with me there."

Where is the peace and rest and contentment? Now, if a man is saved he has entered into that peace and that rest. He is walking beside still waters and walking in paths of righteousness. The peace of God ruleth in his heart.

And, sixthly, salvation is to be perfectly conformed to his image. David said, "I will be satisfied when I awake with his likeness."

And I will tell you this. Those who are saved are going to continue to believe and continue to walk with Christ and continue in the gospel until, like Enoch, they walk through this life and walk right into glory. They walk through this life and they live in faith and they die in faith and they go to heaven in faith. They continue like they started.

So the question: When is a man saved? He is saved when God does a work of grace in his heart and gives him the peace of Christ and he bows to the Lordship of Christ and continues in that faith and continues in that gospel.

It is a new life. It is a new creature, not just a profession. It is experience.

Now, if you want this tape, you write for it. It is called, "When is a Man Saved?" We will send it to you and we have got another message on the other side. So here is the address. Until next week may God bless you.