

# The Joy of Salvation!

## Why We Need Salvation

There is one and only one God, and that God created the universe and everything in it. He created mankind beginning with two people named Adam and Eve. God blessed them and gave them only one rule that they must not break or they would die. He told them not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 1-2).

God is a loving God, and he allowed Adam and Eve to demonstrate their faith in him in this way – by leaving it up to him to declare what was good and what was evil. But Adam and Eve desired to be wise like God and to decide for themselves what was good and what was evil, and they ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-19). That moment is often called the “Fall of Man”:

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>1</sup>

They failed to honor God as God, the very thing you and I do when we sin – and we, too, are guilty and condemned to die because of our sin:

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned

The Bible says we are all without excuse (Romans 1:20). You and I are born rebels against God.

God is a holy God, and no sin can enter into his presence. If our sin is not taken away from us, we are doomed to an eternity of horrible torment in hell, a lake of fire (Psalm 92:7; Revelation

20:15). Our sin is an infinite offense against God, and our infinite offense demands an infinite punishment – and the demands of God’s justice will be satisfied. God is a perfect judge.

If somebody committed a terrible crime against you or your loved one, and that person went to trial, what would you think of a judge who refused to punish that criminal? A judge like that is just as guilty as the criminal – he’s a corrupt judge! God is not like that. God is not a corrupt judge who will look the other way. He is a righteous judge who cannot overlook even one sin.

This is why we need salvation. We have all sinned, and the demands of God’s justice must be satisfied. We cannot hide our sin from him, and nothing we can do will cancel the guilt of our sin. As guilty rebels, the best things we can do are still worthless in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6).

## The Way of Salvation

But there is hope, thank God! God is a loving God who has provided a way for us to be reconciled to him through Jesus Christ, who was crucified on a cross almost 2,000 years ago.

Does that sound mysterious to you? To understand this mystery, you must first understand that *mankind* has to satisfy the demands of God’s justice. Mankind has sinned, and mankind must pay the penalty – but no ordinary man can do it.

You and I certainly can’t pay the penalty for each other. We would never be done paying for our *own* sins, much less each other’s! No, it takes a special man, a man who is himself infinitely holy, so that in an instant he can pay the infinite penalty for us. That man is Jesus, the Son of God, and he has already done exactly that on the cross.

Our one God is a God made up of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a great mystery, and we cannot understand it perfectly with our puny minds. But the Son

came down to earth and was born as a real man named Jesus – fully God, and fully man (Philippians 2:5-11). He never sinned, not even once, even though he was tempted just like we are (Hebrews 4:15). He was perfect.

Jesus was born a Jew. He preached to the Jews that they needed to humble themselves and submit to God. He accused the Jewish leaders of being hypocrites, and this angered them enough that they convinced their Roman rulers to execute Jesus by crucifixion. It all happened just as God had said it would long ago, through the prophets (Acts 2:22-23; Acts 3:18).<sup>2</sup>

When Jesus died on the cross, he took upon himself the guilt of the world. At that moment, something happened even more painful than the very nails that held him up on the cross! The sinless Jesus became sin itself in the eyes of the Father, as Jesus took our sins upon himself:

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for your sin so that you will not have to, if only you trust in him (Matthew 27:45-54; Romans 3:23-25). In an instant, on that cross, the demands of God’s justice were satisfied for all who believe.

But Jesus did not just die on the cross – he rose again from the grave! When Jesus did that, he conquered death. He will come again one day, and those who are in Jesus will be with him

2 What do the Jews have to do with all of this? God, who created the universe and rules it as he sees fit, has a plan that uses different people in different ways. Early in the history of the world, God promised a man named Abraham that he would father a nation (the Jews) that God would love in a special way, and he also promised that the Gentiles (all the other nations) would be blessed one day through the Jews. Jesus Christ, by his sacrifice and resurrection, is fulfilling this promise.

<sup>1</sup> All Bible quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001).

forever (Matthew 28:6; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

## How to Know the Joy of Salvation

Jesus paid the penalty for your sins as a free gift to you, if you will only accept it. He loves you that much!

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This free gift is for all who believe in Jesus:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But if you refuse to believe, you reject this gift:

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? If you have not, trust him right now, right where you are.

Maybe you think that you have to *do* something just right to be saved from hell. But no! To be saved, you do not have to “turn over a new leaf”, nor be baptized, nor take communion (though you will do all these things, after you believe!). You do not have to “walk down the aisle,” nor do you have to pray a certain kind of prayer. In fact, if you try to *do anything* to be saved, you are already trusting in somebody other than Christ: yourself! Christians are told:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

If there was anything *you* could do that would help save you, then you could boast about it one day - but God will share his glory with no one. Salvation is a gift, to be received by faith alone. Place your faith in Jesus Christ’s righteousness to

save you from your sin, and you will be saved.

Are you still unsure of how you can have this wonderful gift of salvation that Jesus has prepared for you? There is a story in the Bible of one dear man who wanted to know how to be saved. He was a Roman jailer and was in charge of keeping two of Christ’s messengers in jail. The two messengers were named Paul and Silas. Though they had been badly beaten, they prayed and sang hymns while the other prisoners listened. A great earthquake came and opened the doors of the jail, and all the prisoners were able to escape. The jailer was dismayed, and was going to kill himself. Paul and Silas called out to him that they were still there, and told him not to hurt himself. The jailer rushed in to them and cried out, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they answered:

Acts 16:31a “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

Simply *believe*. Turn to God and accept this wonderful gift prepared for you!

You see, if you turn to God, and cling to him as he lifts you from the filth of your sin, it is God who is doing all the work for you. Once you see that, accept it, and embrace it, you will be changed forever. This is what it means to be “born again.” Your love for worldly things will begin to be replaced by a love for heavenly things.

And *that* is true joy! The joy of salvation is the joy of breaking the chains of sin, and the joy of being at peace with God, growing in your love for him, and bringing him glory with your life.

If after reading this you have placed your faith in Christ, please give me a call so that we can encourage and pray for one another:

Todd Mitchell, Pastor  
First Baptist Church  
1620 10th Ave  
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1024  
320-564-3748  
<http://www.firstbaptistgranitefalls.org>

# The Joy of Salvation!

*Do you know it?*

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