

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." I Thessalonians 5:9-10.

I. What Is It?

1. That we should not be lost.

All have sinned and deserve wrath. The longer we live in sin, therefore, the greater the amount of wrath our iniquities are treasuring up. And yet, although we are daily provoking the Divine anger, God has not appointed us to wrath. He willeth not the death of any sinner.

2. That we should be saved.

God has told us that His will is that all shall be saved. So, if any one perishes, it is not because of God's secret purpose, but his own want of inclination.

What is included in salvation?

(1) The forgiveness of our sins.

That is the beginning of it. We cannot be right with God unless our sins are blotted out and covered over and cast behind God's back. When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the Gospel, He said, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, to die, to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem."

When Paul went up and down the Mediterranean region, turning thousands of souls to God and to Christ, this was his text: "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." And then he went on and said, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are freely justified by the law of Moses." If you have salvation, your sins are forgiven.

(2) The adoption into the family of God.

You are made a child of God. It is written, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." God Almighty becomes our Father. Christ becomes our brother. We are heirs and joint heirs with Jesus to all of everything that is included in God. When we are made children of God, He makes Himself responsible for our welfare. Paul says, "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things." If God loved us enough to send His Son to die for us, I am certain He loves us enough to take care of us and provide for us the things that are necessary for us to serve Him and to serve each other.

(3) The gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is more important than many seem to think. Unless we received this gift, salvation wouldn't amount to very much. It is the Holy Spirit in us, His presence, power, purpose, Who gives us the grace, wisdom, strength, courage, and all else we need to overcome the evil one.

Salvation is both an instantaneous and a progressive process. We are saved from hell fire; from Satan; from wages of sin; from curse of law, the minute

we accept Christ as our Saviour. But there follows a process of growth. There is a growth in grace, stature, wisdom, power, usefulness, service, ability, etc., as we go on living out our lives here upon the earth after we are saved. It is the Holy Spirit guiding, instructing, empowering, enlightening in every way in which we need strength, wisdom, and grace, who gives us what it takes to serve God in an acceptable manner.

It is written, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

(4) The Home in Heaven.

We get this when our lives here upon earth are finished. Because Jesus definitely spoke to us the word of hope, of immortality, and eternal life when He said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." That is our assurance of the resurrection and the mansions in glory.

Salvation includes freedom from the past, fellowship and power in the present, and a glorious hope for the future.

a. Salvation is valuable.

It is valuable because of what it cost.

(a) It cost God His only begotten Son.

(b) It cost Christ His home in heaven.

It cost Him loneliness, heartaches, and blood shedding on Calvary's cross.

(c) It costs the Christian everything he is and has to be an out-and-out Christian. Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. Someone said, "It doesn't take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him."

It is valuable because of what the sinner loses if he rejects it.

b. Salvation is desirable.

You may say, "If salvation is valuable, it is desirable;" that such is true of anything that is valuable. Many things that are valuable are not desirable. We do not care to possess them, nor do we waste our time to obtain them. Salvation is different. It is valuable and desirable. Why desirable?

(a) It offers you a better way to live.

If there were no sin, death, resurrection, judgment, heaven nor hell, living the Christian life would be better than living the life of a sinner. It is cleaner, purer, more peaceful, more satisfactory. It makes you feel better. You will live longer. Will have more friends. It is a thrill to live the Christian life, buck the line for Jesus, whip the devil, stand out above the crowd and say, "I don't care what anybody else does, I am going to live for the Lord." Salvation is desirable because it offers you a better way to live.

(b) It offers you a better way to die.

I have seen people die -- some in childhood, others in manhood and womanhood, and still others in old age. Some were unconscious toward the last, and others were conscious to the end. There is a difference between a Christian's dying and a sinner's dying.

Picture yourself stretched out on your deathbed. Going to be there, so might as well prepare for it. Suppose you have said "no" to the Gospel and rejected Christ. Then, there is nothing waiting for you except the judgment, curse of law, and wrath of God. It is a fearful

thing to die out of Christ. But, if you have trusted the Lord, if your sins are forgiven, if you are saved, if you are a child of God, if your name is written in the book of life, if you have promise of a home in heaven, death loses its sting and the grave its victory. When the hour of death comes you wrap the habiliments of your couch about you and float off on the wings of death into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation does offer you a better way to die.

- (c) It offers you a better home in the life to come.
Not going to heaven because have a college degree, nor to hell because you do not have one; nor because have or not have money. Salvation is the line of demarcation. It draws distinction between the two places, If you are saved, no matter who you are, what you are, what people think about you, heaven is your eternal home. If lost, there is nothing trinity can do to keep you out of hell. Nothing but salvation can close hell and open heaven.

c. Salvation is obtainable.

- (a) It is God's will that all men be saved.
"As I live, saith the Lord, I have no joy in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked might turn from his wicked way. Turn ye, for why will ye die?" "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God and our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
- (b) Jesus died to save every one of us.
"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." John 3:16 too.
- (c) The Holy Spirit invites every one of us to come and accept this salvation.
"The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

II. How Is God's Purpose Accomplished?

1. There is only one way in which it can be effected.
It is secured by the mediation of Jesus Christ. It is brought about by the action of "our Lord Jesus Christ." "Neither is there salvation in any other."
2. This one way involved the death of Christ for us.
His death was necessary to our salvation. It was substitutionary. It was for us. That which our sins provoked was borne by Christ. His death rescued us from wrath.

God has put one condition in the way of our obtaining this salvation. Put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; place your trust in the Son of God, for it is written, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." God is offering this bountiful, this superabundant salvation, this pardon from all sins, this adoption into the family of God, this infilling with the Holy Spirit, this home in heaven to every one of you today as the free gift of His great love.

III. What Are The Results When God's Purpose For Us Is Accomplished?

1. Life in Christ here.
Life in Christ. Participation in His life, power and blessedness. Fellowship and companionship with Christ. This life is in union with Christ. Wherever you go, Christ goes. He never leaves you nor forsakes you. This fellowship with Him is independent of the greatest outward changes. It remains whether we wake or sleep, that is, whether we live or die.

2. Life with Christ hereafter.

Salvation has two parts — that which is present, or the state of grace; and that which is future, or the state of glory. Our association with Him in glory will be more intimate and blessed than here. We shall also live with all believers while we are in Christ's company up there. This hope of resurrection and recognition hereafter should lessen our grief over the dead.

Will you accept God's invitation and by simple faith receive the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour? May God help you to do it now.