

SAVED TO THE UTMOST

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

This is truly one of the great verses of scripture. It is in the heart of the central chapter of the great Epistle to the Hebrews. The theme of this epistle is the living Christ, and this verse teaches truths that are really the heart and crown of the whole letter.

Thank God for this tremendous verse of Scripture. It is as the shadow of a rock in a weary land, as the lifegiving waters of the desert oasis, as the lights of home to the weary traveler. It is simple, sublime and satisfactory; so simple that a child may understand it; so sublime that it embraces the very majesty, glory, dominion and power of God; so satisfactory that it is the Great Physician's balm to the wounded soul and feverish spirit.

Jesus Christ is a great and wonderful Saviour. As the stars disappear when the sun rises, so all other subjects fade away when we think of Christ. For more than nineteen centuries He has amply demonstrated His wonderful ability and supernatural power as a Saviour. He has never failed in any way. He has never lost a client. Grace for sin, fullness for poverty, peace for turmoil, power for weakness, health for disease, good measure, pressed down, running over, have been bestowed upon those who by faith have claimed Him as their Redeemer.

God has never told anyone that He is partly able to save you and that you must needs work out part of your salvation yourself. He is not telling you that He will save you if by your own efforts you become morally clean and fine, for God, knowing the nature of man, knows that he needs An Utmost Saviour; one who is able to save you to the utmost; one who is able to save you from your past; one who is able to save you from your present; and one who is able to save you for the future.

God's Word tells us that in so far as God is concerned "He hath concluded all under sin." "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." God declares that all inhabitants of all nations are in need of salvation. There is a great difference between God's and man's appraisal of sin. Man judges his condition and that of his neighbor by what he sees on the exterior. God searches the innermost being of man and judges by what He knows. Men measure man's goodness by social standards. God measures man's depravity by spiritual standards, therefore, we see that our appraisal of man's condition and God's appraisal are two entirely different viewpoints.

It seems that many never realize the need of being saved. They think they are sufficient of themselves. But there are others who know that they need to be saved. People need to be saved from sin of all kinds.

Man needs a Saviour because he is dead spiritually. When Adam fell and thereby plunged the whole human race into sin, man died spiritually. God had said, "The day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die." This did not mean physical death, but spiritual separation from God. To this day all men outside of Christ are spiritually dead. If you are among the number without Him, only the supernatural power of Christ can bring you forth from your spiritual grave.

I. The Ability.

Sin has rendered man helpless; therefore, he is not able to save himself, even though he frequently imagines that he can, and in vain tries to do so. Of Christ it was said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Ability always commands respect. One likes to see ability exercised in any department of human life. We are delighted to see one who is able to do his work efficiently. Christ is able to save. If you go to a physician when you are indisposed he may diagnose your case and say, "It is beyond the realm of my skill; I will send you to a specialist." But Christ is a specialist in all cases and none of them are beyond His ability. No matter how deep in sin the sinner may have gone, Christ is able to reach him and to save him.

Salvation has reference to the past, the present and the future. It includes deliverance from the penalty of sin (past), from the power of sin (present) and from the presence of sin (future). Note that it is Christ Who is able to save. All that is necessary for salvation Christ is able to perform. He is the only One Who can save. No it, however big or important, can save a soul. While others may instruct and sinners may reform, only Christ can save. This word "save" implies sin. Sin has wrecked us and we need to be saved from the wreck. Sin has polluted us and we need to be saved from its pollution. It has afflicted us and we need to be saved from its malady. It has brought us into condemnation and we must be saved from its guilt. Christ is able to save any man from sin's penalty and sin's power, no matter how completely he is fettered or how hopelessly he is straining in his own strength to throw off the shackles of sin. He is able to save from the consequences of sin both here and hereafter.

1. Christ is able to forgive sins.

That was His claim when He was here in the flesh. Of Himself He said, "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10). He can forgive any sin except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We know that He has power to forgive sins because He has forgiven us.

What a joyous and glorious experience! When a friend asked Dr. Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, what he considered his greatest discovery, he replied, "It was that of the saving power of Christ in my life."

2. Christ is able to save from sin's power.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). No one ever came to Christ for deliverance from the power of sin without receiving it. It is no mere temporal or transient deliverance which Christ effects for His people, but it is a supernatural, spiritual and eternal one. Since Christ is stronger than Satan, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

3. Christ is able to keep you from falling.

"He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Daily in the lives of many Christ is proving that He can keep people from falling.

4. Christ is able to transform the lives of those who trust Him. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Saul of Tarsus was a vicious persecutor, but Christ saved him and transformed him into a devoted disciple and heroic apostle. Christ has saved some of the most notorious sinners and transformed them into most useful Christians.
5. Christ is able to fill the saddest hearts with the most radiant joy. "They looked unto him and were radiant" (Psalm 34:5). "Though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8). Christ lifts people out of the depths of despair to the heights of rapturous joy.
6. Christ is able to use in glorious service those whom He saves. He frequently uses the most unlikely prospects; people who have such little promise.
7. Christ is able to give eternal life to all who trust Him. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).

Christ is able to save to the uttermost. "Uttermost" is one of the biggest words in our language. No one knows how far the uttermost is. Nobody has ever seen the uttermost. A woman who unhappily lived always very near the poverty line reached middle life before the pleasure of a visit to the seaside came her way. On seeing the vast stretch of the ocean for the very first time, she was overheard saying, "My, that's the first time I've seen anything of which there's enough of it!" We sympathize with her, and immediately rejoice that "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea." There is enough of His mercy and grace.

II. The Approach.

"Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." This approachable Saviour has the gift of salvation for all who will come unto Him. Our salvation is conditioned upon our approaching Him in simple trust. There is no other way whereby any sinner can approach God except through Christ. A sinner must not approach Him with pompous pride, as if he thought that he deserved salvation, but with the earnest desire of a thirsty soul after living water. He must trust Christ to bring him into a saving relationship with the Father.

He is able to save completely all who come unto God by Him. That is the condition. He will not save us apart from Christ. He will not save us if we presume to come in our own name. He will not save us if we offer as the price of salvation some alleged self-righteousness, which is not righteousness at all. He will save only those who come unto God by Him, as Christ said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

III. The Assurance.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." By His death on the cross Christ provided all that was needed for our

salvation. Now by His life He brings home to us all the gifts and privileges which He purchased at Calvary, when He died in our stead. His salvation leaves nothing to be desired. It is complete in every respect.

Dr. Hubert L. Simpson has reminded us of a picture that was painted for the Royal Corps of Signallers, depicting an incident during the Great War. A signaller, who had been sent out unarmed to repair a cable which had been snapped by shellfire, had tried to restore the interrupted contact. He had failed and was lying dead in No-Man's-Land. The picture shows him lying dead in the fulfillment of his task, holding in contact the broken ends in his stiffening hands. Beneath the picture is the one word "Through." That is what Christ did for us by His death. Sin had snapped the contact between God and man. Alone, in No-Man's-Land, unarmed, save with infinite understanding and infinite love, Christ brought the broken ends together in His death. And we who have been made at peace with God through our Saviour's death, are saved continually by His life, Who is our Advocate at the right hand of God.

Christ's salvation is full, complete, perfect and everlasting. It is far better to be without health, money and friends than to be without eternal life. Sir Thomas Lipton, the multi-millionaire, shortly before dying, said: "I'd give up every trophy in my collection for the one I have not got." That was eternal life. Lipton was a great winner of boat races in England and America, but he went out unprepared to meet God because he failed to trust Christ, Who "is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." If you have not trusted Christ as your Saviour and thereby come into possession of eternal life, come to Him in simple trust and full surrender now, and let Him save you while you have time and opportunity.