

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18.

We are going to consider the most important thing in this world to you -- your relationship to Christ or the salvation of your soul. There is nothing in all of life that compares with personal salvation in importance. Concerning this all-important theme there are certain things which you should know.

I. That You Are A Sinner.

It is not a question of whether or not you think and acknowledge that you are a sinner. God says that you are and that settles it whether you admit it or not. The fact that you are a sinner is stated clearly in God's Word:

"There is no man that sinneth not" (I Kings 8:46).

"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10);.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

You are not a sinner because you sin. Rather, you sin because you are a sinner. An apple tree is not an apple tree because it bears apples. It bears apples because it is an apple tree. If you were an angel, you would not sin, but because you are a sinner you sin. If you were not a sinner, you would not sin. It is because you are a sinner that you sin. That is why God is not concerned as much about your sins as He is about the fact that you are a sinner.

All of us are sinners in the sight of God. Are you willing and ready to acknowledge that you are a sinner?

II. That You Need To Be Saved.

Your very nature is corrupt. Every element and faculty of your being has been weakened by sin. Sin has defiled your mind, darkened your understanding, defiled your conscience, enslaved your will and perverted your affections. Even though you may discontinue or overcome some of your sins, you are still a sinner. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 7:9). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

You are included in that word "all." There is not one who has not strayed away. Notice that God does not compare us to horses, dogs or cats, but to sheep. Horses, dogs and cats can find their way home, but when a sheep strays away or gets lost it can never find its way back. Therefore, someone must go in search of it, find it and bring it home. You, too, like a lost sheep, again and again have turned away from Him and have gone astray in your own way, and have not been able to find your way back. Because you are a lost sinner, you need to be saved.

III. That You Cannot Save Yourself.

You are a sinner and you need to be saved, but you cannot save yourself. Regardless of whether or not you believe it, you cannot save yourself. God's Word says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).

You cannot be saved by being baptized, by joining a church, by observing the Lord's Supper, by contributing from your earnings, by living a moral life, by doing works of merit, by keeping the Ten Commandments, by living according to the Golden Rule or by doing the best you can. You cannot be your own saviour at all. It is impossible for you to save yourself. Unless you give up all hope of saving yourself, you will never be saved.

IV. That Christ Alone Can Save You.

Sinner though you are, God loves you. He certainly does not like your sin, any more than you like the disease which afflicts your child; but, as certainly as you love your child, God loves you. You love the child in spite of the disease, and God loves you in spite of your sin. His love for you was so great that He gave His Son in order that you might be saved and enjoy eternal life. Could there be any greater proof of His love for you than that? God allowed His Son to suffer the anguish of the cross because of His love for you. Because He loved you and wanted you to be saved He provided a Saviour and salvation for you.

The Bible tells us repeatedly that God does not want you to perish. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezekiel 33:11). "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" (II Peter 3:9).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Christ took your place, suffered in your stead and bore the penalty of your sin. Because of your sin you deserved eternal death but He died in order that you might be saved. He bore your sins in His own body on the tree in order that you might live. He took upon Himself your guilt and gave you His righteousness instead. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). Christ did

not wait until we had ceased being sinners, but He died for us while we were sinners, and He did it because He loved us. He loved you as an individual and gave Himself for you.

The Lord sends His messengers to warn you. The Holy Spirit convicts you of your sin and pleads with you to accept Christ. God has set up His danger signals to warn sinners, lest they go on in their lost condition. It is a certainty that if you go on to hell, you will have to defy His messengers, ignore His pleadings, close your eyes to every stop sign in your way and go over the cross of Christ.

If Christ had not died, there would not have been any atonement for your sin. His shed blood is what atoned for the sins of men. There is not any salvation apart from the blood of Christ. Oh, how Satan hates the blood! Man wants to find another way. The unregenerate heart cannot bear the thought of the blood. Nothing else can take the place of the atoning blood of Christ. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19). The blood of Christ may be repugnant to you now, but once you are saved, it will become very precious to you. Christ alone can save you. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

V. That You Can Be Saved Now.

The issue is now clear. You, who are not saved, know that you are a sinner, that you need to be saved, that you cannot save yourself and that Christ is the only hope of your salvation, but what are you going to do about it? You may know all these things and yet remain lost eternally. A knowledge of His salvation will not save you any more than a knowledge of food will save you from starvation. You must receive it if you are to be saved. A knowledge of water will not quench your thirst. You must drink it if your thirst is to be quenched. A knowledge of medicine will not cure you. You must take the medicine if it is to help you. A knowledge of the laws of swimming will not save you from drowning. You must give yourself over to a rescuer. A knowledge of God's provision of salvation and an understanding of the plan of His salvation will never save you. There must be a response, a reception of Christ's provision on your part, if you are to be saved.

If thus far in your life you have rejected Christ, you must reverse your position and receive Him. One comes into possession of salvation through "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Trust Him for salvation on the basis of this verse, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Christ also said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

You have either accepted or rejected Christ the Saviour. You are either saved or unsaved. You are either a child of God or a follower of Satan. You are either on the way to heaven or on the road to hell. If you are

conscious of your need of a Saviour because you are a lost sinner and unable to save yourself, I appeal to you to receive Christ now. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15).

Salvation is offered to you as a gift, if you will receive Christ. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Come to the Saviour now saying,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Receive Christ into your heart and life now, and then come confessing your faith in Him and unite with the church by baptism as we join in singing.