

Calling on the name of the Lord

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[0 : 00] If you turn with me to the book of Acts chapter 2 and at verse 21 you'll find my text there. Acts 2, 21 which reads, And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now when the birth of Mary's son was announced to Joseph, he received the instruction from the angel, Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.

Christ's mission in coming into the world was defined in his name, Jesus. And constantly throughout the scripture he is spoken about as the saviour, a saviour of men.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And as Jesus himself testified, he said, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

In God's eyes, you and I and everyone else in this world needs to be saved. We are lost. And he has sent Jesus in order that men and women might be saved.

[1 : 28] That there might be a saviour who would rescue them from their lost condition. That we might be rescued from the consequences of lives that leave God outside and live independently of him.

This is what the Bible calls sin. Sin which separates us from our God and makes us his enemies and aliens from him.

Now my text tonight is a simple statement of how a person can be saved. How a person can get right with God. It's part of a sermon that was preached by Peter in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

The day on which Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit on his church was fulfilled. And his sermon was preached to explain to those around what it was that was happening.

What was the explanation of these amazing things that were going on and that had caught the attention of the public in Jerusalem and brought them gathering around open-mouthed and amazed.

[2 : 48] He proclaimed that the Holy Spirit has come just as Jesus had promised. He keeps his word. The Holy Spirit has come.

And whatever else may be said to be true about the Holy Spirit and his coming this verse makes clear that his primary purpose in coming is the salvation of God's people.

This is the great concern of God's heart for you. And if at the last you and I are not saved then we are lost forever.

And so it's a good question for us to ask even as we sit here in church tonight taking part in a Christian act of worship are we saved? Am I saved? Are you saved?

Do we know the salvation of God? Are we on the hell road? Or the heaven road? Is Christ our Saviour? Or is he a stranger to us?

[3 : 54] For there is no middle way. And here then is a verse that concerns us all. It's a verse that should interest us all.

It's a verse about which none of us dare say that has nothing to do with me. I think we might suggest that this verse sets before us the prerequisite for man's salvation.

It tells us the source of man's salvation. It tells us the means of man's salvation. First then the prerequisite for man's salvation.

When will this statement be true? Well it will be true. When I pour out my spirit upon all men. Then whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now this chapter tells us about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He came in power at Pentecost. Now that is not to say that the Holy Spirit was not in the world before.

[5 : 00] We read in the very first page of the Bible how the Spirit moved on the water. We read of the consultation of the Trinity in that passage about a concern with the creation.

Let us make man. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit involved in the work of creation. We read of the work of the Spirit in different ways.

We read of the Spirit of God coming on Bezalel and giving him great skill in order that he might do the necessary carving for the work of the tabernacle. We read of him working in the hearts of men.

We read of him speaking through the prophets. We read of him moving holy men so that they would write the scriptures under his inspiration. We read as we come into the New Testament how the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus without measure.

And when Jesus was on earth amazing things happened. You remember how Peter in his own familiar circumstances of situation as a fisherman confronted with this vast catch of fish something that he couldn't explain apart from the fact that he was in the presence of God the Son.

[6 : 28] He says he falls at Jesus' feet and says depart from me O Lord for I am a sinful man. He sees himself in a new light. Something has happened that has affected his conscience.

People became aware of their sin. People were converted. Remember the man who was let down through the roof by his friends on his couch and the first thing Jesus said to him as he looks at him he said son thy sins are forgiven.

People's burden of sin was lifted. And then you remember how the story went on and by the healing power of Christ he demonstrated the reality of that experience that the man had had that his sin was indeed removed.

people were saved. People were converted. Lives were turned around. Turned around. The hard and go-getter the avaricious Zacchaeus becomes a man who welcomes Christ into his home and demonstrates that his whole outlook has changed and he is giving away money.

He is promising that he will give out fourfold to any that he has done and justice to in his life before. And when Jesus was going away the disciples were sad as we read and Jesus said they were sad but he said it is necessary that I go away but if I go away I will send you another comforter one like me who will abide with you forever.

[7 : 58] He will be in you. And they were given this promise when he went back to heaven you must wait in heaven you must wait in Jerusalem until power comes on you when I will send you then I will send you to do the work that you have to do and he will come.

And so you remember how they went and they waited in Jerusalem. I remember someone telling a story of some people who were in a hut away somewhere in the mountains and they were relying on a line from the power station somewhere away down in the valley and in a terrible dark and stormy night their power went off their lights went off their television went off their refrigerator went off their heat went off and they realised that they would have to get in contact with the power station and one of the members of the party volunteered to go and he disappeared into the howling jail and they wondered and they waited and they sat in the dark and they hoped and they silently prayed he would be alright and after two or three hours suddenly the power came on the lights came on things began to heat the fridge began to hum and they said he's there he's got there the evidence that he had arrived was there and Jesus has gone back to heaven the coming of the Holy Spirit is evidence that he is there in glory therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost he has shed forth this which ye both now see and hear he has come because Christ is in heaven and he has been sent as Jesus promised and that was the explanation of the things that were happening that people speaking in tongues the new understanding the boldness of the disciples and the conversion of three thousand people to Christ on that day this Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is in the world forever the third person of the Trinity God the Holy Spirit someone summed his mission up in poem in verse like this with the Father when the world began resting on the Christ the Son of Man Holy Spirit bringing in God's plan you are with us still today and just before they saw our Lord ascend Christ's disciples heard how he would send one who would bring new life and be their friend and you are with us still today like the fire and wind you came to men when at Pentecost they prayed and then preaching Christ they showed God's power again you are with us still today still you live within God's children here giving boldness and removing fear love, joy, peace and gentleness appear as we prove your power today the coming of the Holy Spirit and we have the work of the Holy Spirit what has he come to do when he is come he will convince the world of sin he will convict men of sin sin of our need of salvation why?

because says Jesus they believe not in me man dismisses God they dismiss Jesus Christ as being irrelevant they do not believe in him they may be cultured they may be decent they may be apparently upright and respectable but if Christ is not in their lives if they are not trusting in him they are sinful people and the Holy Spirit has come and part of his mission is to awaken men to the truth about themselves that they are sinful people out of tune with God the God of this world has blinded people that lest they should see the truth and recognize their need to be saved but the Holy Spirit has come to undo the devil's work because Christ has broken the power of the devil's kingdom and the Holy Spirit come as Christ's agent to apply his salvation in the experience of men has come to open the eyes of the blind to let them see dramatically their need of salvation sometimes it is indeed a dramatic experience sometimes it is just a quiet and growing conviction but it is the work of the Spirit that shows men their need of Christ he has come to convince them of righteousness most of us feel perhaps that we are pretty well alright we like to justify ourselves and point out how we wouldn't behave as other people come but here is true righteousness is not to be found among men it is found in Jesus Christ he will convince the world of righteousness why?

because I go to my Father he is the one who can ascend into the hill of God he alone has hands that are clean and heart that is pure and has not lifted his soul into vanity he will convince men of the righteousness of Jesus Christ and show the great gulf between the reality of what is right in God's sight and what our lives are like and he will convince the world of judgment to come because the prince of this world is judged who is the prince of this world?

[13 : 11] Jesus? no Jesus said it was Satan he is the one that is honored and followed and obeyed by men but his kingdom is condemned Christ has conquered his kingdom his kingdom is doomed his rebellion against heaven is finished and the question you and I are to ask tonight does he have our loyalty and our love and our service?

well if we are we are in a kingdom that is doomed we must give our love and loyalty to Jesus Christ his work to convince the world but then we pass here to the source of salvation whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved who is the person described by this name?

the coming of God the Holy Spirit revealed the presence of the risen Christ Jesus in glory there he is proclaimed Lord we read and we know how in Philippians chapter 2 we read of the descent of Christ down even to the death of the cross and then we read God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name that is the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in Revelation 5 we see him the lamb as it had been slain the Christ returned from his victory at Calvary the only one who is able to take the book of the destiny of the world and the universe in his hands the only one who is able to open the book the destiny of the universe and of your destiny and mine lies in his hand this triumphant risen exalted Christ he is Lord of all he is the one who is worshipped in glory where they know his worth thou art worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing he is king and lord of all he is the conqueror of Satan and he is the one with whom you and I have to do and what is his name his name means his character his name stands for his person his name tells us who he is he is the child that is born on whose shoulders the government shall rest who is himself the mighty God the everlasting father and the prince of peace the word Lord means Jesus he shall save his people from their sins and it is to him you and I must look if we are to be saved look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else no wonder

John Newton could write how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear it soothes his sorrows heals his wounds and drives away his fear that name that precious and peerless name of Jesus the risen and exalted king but notice the provision as well as the person that is indicated by the name or described by the name we have the provision that is proclaimed by this name he is Lord throughout the book of Acts he is described as the Lord he is the one of whom Peter speaks when he stands defiantly before the leaders of the Jews who would tell them to stop preaching in this name you mustn't speak anymore in this name and Peter says there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved this and this alone is the saving name

Jesus Christ the Lord his life of perfect righteousness fulfilled all righteousness for his people he lived the life that you and I are called on to live in perfect obedience to God and which we fail at every turn to measure up to but he lived that life of perfect righteousness and he died the death that all his people deserve to die bearing shame and scoffing rude says the believer in my place condemned he stood he is the substitute of his people all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all his perfect righteousness his death as our substitute and his risen life his risen being raised from the dead as evidence that the price of sin was paid in full are all factors in our the saving offer that is provided he purchased our redemption to buy us out of the slavery for sin he has come as he says himself reading from Isaiah 61 to preach liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound the fact is accomplished it is now a message to be preached by this man says Paul preaching in Antioch is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by him you can be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses now the Holy Spirit is to convince people of their need to be saved but it is also to present to them and to demonstrate to them and to show them the glory of Jesus that he can save to lift him up before people to open their eyes that they may see that he is the saviour that's what Jesus said about him he shall convince the world of sin righteousness and judgement yes but he shall glorify me he shall lead you into all the truth who is the truth but Jesus

[19 : 42] I am the truth he shall glorify me he shall present the Christ he shall receive of mine and show it unto you the truth about God about man and about salvation and the fact that Jesus is Lord tells us that salvation is provided in him it tells us that he is able to apply it there is none that can hinder him from saving his people he is all powerful no power can hinder him he can apply it to whoever he will savingly and since none can take his power from him here is the saviour the mighty God who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him this Jesus whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord on Jesus shall be saved which brings me to the final thing the means of salvation who then is saved are people automatically saved has the death of Christ given a blanket salvation to everyone so that they are all saved

I once heard someone actually say this at a meeting that his task was simply to tell people that they are saved and that and that they should act as saved people no that is not that is not what the gospel message is he is not one people are not automatically saved we are by nature children of wrath even as others and more than that he does not come and force his way into any person's life he will not come and save you against your will and we even need the work of the Holy Spirit to renew our will to make us new to make us willing it is a willing people who will come to Christ in the day of his power people who have been made willing by the grace of God's Holy Spirit working in them a person who wants to be right with God who then will be saved well the verse tells us who will be saved whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved so here you notice you are told the grace by which salvation comes what must I do to be saved it says here only call nothing more as simple as that it is not my life it is not my works it is not my record it is not what I have done it is not my goodness it is not my having more goodness than badness you and I have to learn that we can do nothing to promote our own salvation there is nothing that we can do to recommend us to God to persuade him that we are worth saving

God sees us as lost we are without God and we are without hope in the world I think it was Bishop Ryle who said on one occasion the only thing that I can contribute to my salvation is the sin that makes it necessary Augustus top lady had realized this when he realized that Christ had had to die to save sin and he wrote not the labor of my hands can fulfill thy laws demands could my zeal nor respite no could my tears not forever flow all for sin could not atone thou must save and thou alone salvation salvation is of grace it is the free gift of God it is granted by God to the caller the person who calls with an open heart and with empty hands to receive knowing that he that the wages of the life he has lived is death but the gift of God in Jesus Christ is eternal life the call does not save but

Jesus promises he will save the caller the person who calls by grace says the writer to the to the Ephesians by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God he is in the call that enables us to embrace Jesus Christ that's what we learned in our catechism isn't it when we were in Sunday school that difficult answer that we wondered about effectual calling it is a work of God's spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel who calls shall be saved he will not save himself God will save him

Christ will save him the savior will take him and save him grace is in it from beginning to end amazing grace the grace by which the salvation comes whosoever calls in the name of the Lord and the glory of the gospel simplicity what must I do to be saved how can you be saved tonight call upon this mighty savior think of that and wonder that a simple call to Christ will bring salvation to you that is all and he will save you he will transfer you from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the son of his love I remember hearing Lane Adams an American Presbyterian preacher saying that when I come to that part of the sermon where I tell people how to be saved

[26 : 16] I can hardly say it for excitement for the thrill and the wonder of the simple truth that is presented in God's word just call on the Lord you don't need to have special speech you don't need to have an ordered prayer you just have to call you don't need to have any theological niceties just call you don't need to go to the priest you don't need a minister you don't need the evangelist you don't need someone to come with you you just call call as a little child calls for his mother call as a drowning man calls for help call as Peter called to Jesus when he was beginning to sink Lord save me in great emergencies we don't choose our own words fastidiously the heart rules the mind and the lips just speak out the one time in my life I saw somebody drowning or thinking he was drowning he was shouting and whatever he was saying it wasn't help it was something like ho ho ho but we knew what he wanted the message got through and they got a rope and they got him pulled out and so will

God know when you call in your need no religious knowledge then or correctness is needed justice that Christ is a great saviour and you are a sinner without hope apart from him and you are calling and reaching up in your call to him that he would save you and he promises to save and he is able to save you may feel ignorant you may feel burdened you may feel powerless you may even feel hopeless but call he is mighty to save anything else is useless call call like a toddler will call a simpleton can call a solitary person can call anybody can call you can call and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved and that is the word of God which stands and will not change a word of God which cannot be broken the word of the saviour says him that comes to me

I will in no wise cast out and that being the case let us be sure that we call and we call now without delay may he bless our meditation on his word may we respond to the challenge of its truth let us pray how we rejoice our gracious God in the great glory of the message of the gospel in the finished work of Christ in the triumph of our saviour in the glorious power position he occupies of power at the right hand of the majesty on high and we bless thee oh lord our god that whosoever calls on the name of the lord may be saved and we ask a gracious god that even now thou will hear the calls of thy people as they for the salvation that is guaranteed to those who call on the name of the lord we ask it for Jesus name sake amen