

Pastors Perspective Column for September 2022

By Pastor Tim White

Why Do We Need to be “Saved”?

Fifty years ago, this past spring, I was “saved.” In other words, I became a Christian – a follower of Jesus Christ and a child of God. Although I had been brought to church from infancy until about sixth grade, it was not until the age of fourteen, when I heard the testimony of a former New York City gang leader, that I sensed my need to ask for God’s forgiveness and to surrender the rest of my life to Him. Like you, I have stumbled plenty of times over the years, but I have continued to trust my Heavenly Father and His Word to guide my life.

What does it mean to “be saved”? Some will invite people to faith in Christ by saying, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” Well, yes, He absolutely does – on both points. However, personal salvation comes about when one agrees with God that they are separated from Him due to their own sinful nature and need a Savior. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).

Furthermore, understanding the magnificent nature of God – from whom we have been separated by our sin nature – opens our eyes to just how “amazing” it is that we can be saved. In Genesis, God is the pre-existent One who spoke the stars, planets and all that is on the earth into existence. He is the One whose very “form” is like the brightness of the sun, and when the angels come into His presence, they fall before Him in worship, declaring, “Holy, holy, holy!” (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8)

The Psalmists wrote, “Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.” (Psalm 97:3-5). In Exodus and Hebrews, God is called “a consuming fire” (Ex. 24:17, Heb. 12:29). In heaven, God sits on a throne from which come “flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder.” (Rev 4:5). Upon His throne, He sits as the sovereign and righteous judge before whom all people will give account for their deeds (1 Pet. 4:5), including their secrets (Rom 2:16).

God the Father, the God of creation, whose glory and power are revealed in nature and described in His Word (the bible), is not someone to be trifled with or ignored. And yet, this is the same God of whom the bible says: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (Jesus) as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 4:10). Yes, this God, who causes demons to tremble and whom all of heaven worship, sees us, knows us, and chooses to love us – first! There is no love greater than this.

“Sin” – what a bother it is! Sin is defined as “missing the mark.” We have all “missed the mark” of being innocent and righteous before a holy and just God and therefore are guilty and

deserving of judgment. (More on how “Sin” entered the world in a future edition of the Times). “But God demonstrated his own love for us, “in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8). It is incredible to realize that THAT “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:19) – without anyone asking Him to do so. I do not understand why such an almighty God would even care. But the bible is clear - God honestly, truly, and sacrificially loves us!

You may be wondering if it is too late to surrender their life to such a loving Father. But rest assured, “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9). And as Peter announced to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord (Jesus) will be saved.” (Acts 2:21). And, for the record, “everyone” in the Greek means, “everyone”!

Does God require us to clean up our act before coming to Him for forgiveness? Many try, but the answer is “no.” There is no way to “earn” our way to heaven. God invites us to come just as we are. For, it is “by grace we are saved through our faith (in Christ), not by any works” or amount of good behavior. (Eph. 2:8-9). The “clean-up” (choosing to live right) is our love-response to God for our salvation – and He even helps us with that.

One final day, God will be the righteous Judge of all peoples on earth. But today, He is the One who loves you and longs to redeem you as His beloved child, lead you, and strengthen you for whatever lies ahead.

If today you realize that you need God’s forgiveness and the salvation He offers, why not call upon Him right now? You can say something like this: “Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I want to be saved and cleansed of my sin. I accept your free gift of salvation through Jesus’ death (and resurrection) in my place and believe that I am now saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Please come into my life, fill me with Your Spirit, and show me how to live. In Jesus Name, Amen.”

If you prayed that prayer from your heart, you can be assured that your Heavenly Father has heard you and forgiven you – you have become a child of God (John 1:12)! The first step is to find a local church and connect with other Christians. Pick up a bible and begin by reading the book of John, then Luke and Acts to learn more about Jesus, faith, and how to live this new life.

Your journey into how to have a relationship with God as your loving Father, and Jesus as your savior and friend begins now. If you have questions or need guidance, feel free to contact us at Tri-County Christian Center, at (509) 576-5484. We welcome anyone who would like to attend our weekend services, which take place on Sundays at 10:30am at Tri-County Christian Center at E 320 "H" Street, Deer Park, WA 99006.