

Salvation – Part 4

Remember the journey to the cross, then the cross, then came into the Kingdom of God through the doorway of salvation; we started with our discussion about what is salvation in its different aspects. Today we're going to move forward into beginning to work out our salvation. Salvation, remember, in a global sense means saved or rescued. In different categories, it begins with our justification that we are, in fact, declared righteous before a Holy God. That involves also positional sanctification because at the moment we are justified through faith in Christ, we are set apart from that instant on for the purposes of God. But that's not the end of the story because, of course, there is to follow progressive sanctification where we're transformed from glory to glory by the renewing of our minds into the very image of Christlikeness here on planet Earth to reflect the glory of God. And it culminates, at least in regard to ourselves, at the time of the Rapture when we receive our glorified bodies. Just to continue reminding us about some of the usages of the term body, soul and spirit, this is just another diagram to reflect that—I believe, by memory, this came out of a Hal Lindsay book called The Late Great Planet Earth I think that I read shortly after becoming a Christian. But you can see in his diagrammatic scheme, God, of course, is open ended because He is infinite; the Holy Spirit is the communion with us into our spirits; he used certain functions of the spirit, he talked about such as intuition by which we receive those intuitive revelations that are in addition, yet consistent with Scripture, the conscience and communion with God. The spirit then interacts with our soul which is our mind, emotion and our wills. The soul of man, then, is what plays the music upon the body—the body being the harp of the soul. The body, of course, also receiving input from the physical realm with all the five senses; the Word of God coming into the mind of man through two avenues—sight and hearing; when we read the Bible, it enters through sight into the mind; the spirit then bears witness to our spirit that this is truth; and when you sit here today and listen to a speaker that's basing his whole presentation on the Word of God, then of course the Bible (the Word of God) is coming in through your hearing into the mind and the same process unfolds.

Today we begin working out our salvation. Now I'm sure that you understand that working out our salvation is what we do from now on. As individual Christians, that's what we do collectively as the body of Christ and it's what we will do in the rest of this series so long as you all allow me the pleasure of continuing. So working out our salvation is not a finite topic that we will cover in a session or two. I have initiated the discussion about working out our salvation within the next time or two. A subtitle you could attach to this, giving a testimonial aspect, is the pleasure principle of our relationship with God. And that emphasis is testimonial because, remember, my childhood experience where I got a full measure of the revelation of the wrath of God, where I felt totally condemned, totally unworthy, totally unclean, totally inhibited, totally insecure and turned that into achievement, if you remember that. Academic achievement, athletic achievement, anything I could do to try to justify to myself that I really was somewhat okay even though I felt totally ashamed and condemned by my early experience with Christianity. So, therefore, when I attach to the pleasure principle, you can see why that is something that I relished as a Christian for the past eleven years.

So our salvation, via the cross of Christ of course, is the greatest evidence of God's love for us. While we were yet sinners, dead in our sin, children of wrath, hostile to God, "but God"...there is no other reason that "but God" would reach across that gap to restore His relationship with us except as evidence of His love. So it's hard for us to believe; I still have to work on it before the Lord to fully believe the love that He has for me even in my weakness. That love is just too large an abstraction for us to absorb all at once. It's too large to get our arms of understanding around. Now when we are sincere, but immature believers in Jesus Christ, God has moved from just loving us to now enjoying us as we grow in the likeness of His Son. He then enjoys us even in the midst of our residual weakness. It's there that we're becoming an exhilarating fragrance to the nostrils of God. We become the aroma of Christ unto God. We're viewed as pure by God; because, remember we have the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. We're about the only thing in all of existence that is viewed as pure by God. Because what could be purer than His Son and the Son's righteousness is what we have. The only things that would contest for that level of purity, of course, would be God Himself and potentially the unfallen angels. We're the inheritance prepared by God the Father, for God the Son—not just an inheritance, not just one out of ten billion parts of an inheritance, but the major part of the inheritance prepared by the Father for the Son.

So this is not a trivial place that we have in the heart of God. And that revelation, I believe, becomes a key; because we have the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and one of the keys is that key of the pleasure that God feels in us from the moment of our salvation on. We, in fact, have a God given will that tends to migrate toward that which gives us the greatest pleasure. So given that, the key is not to relinquish pleasure, the key is to simply change the source from which you derive the greatest pleasure. The key to spiritual growth is to have pleasure in God. The key to having pleasure in God is to know God and to know the pleasure that He has in you. The key part of knowing Him, and knowing His pleasure in you, is to know that you know, that you know, that He loves you and enjoys you even in your weakness. Hebrews 11:6 says – Those who come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. So I cannot love a God who is uncaring or apathetic toward me. That God I would run from. I would do as Adam and Eve did and run and hide behind the bush. I can only love God when I am secure in His love for me. That's the fulfillment of I John 4:19 – we love because He first loved us. We do not love by our efforts to love. We love by progressively learning of His love for us and then relishing and wallowing in the love that God has for us. That love of God, once known, is the magnetic attraction that draws us closer to Him. That engenders a passion for oneness in our hearts toward God—remember, love being a passion for oneness. But we cannot have a passion to be one with a God that we do not believe has a passion to be one with us. Because if He doesn't, we would be operating contrary to the passions of God. So we cannot work up a passion to be one with God. We receive the revelation of His passion to be one with us and then work out that revelation. The closer we get, the more we receive of the revelation of the love of God for us. Then the more that we know that He enjoys us; the more we know the pleasure He takes in us and then the more pleasure that we know in Him. That's when everything else in existence becomes less attractive. That's when everything else becomes as Paul described it—dung compared to the pleasures of knowing God. That's

when we enter the crescendo of delight with God. And apart from that crescendo of delight, everything remains dreaded duty as opposed to the life of God.

So my knowledge of His love for me and His joy in me is what brings joy to me. I cannot work up joy. Joy is something that flows freely from the one who has the revelation of the love of God. But when we receive that revelation of the love of God for us and the revelation of the joy that God has in us, that's when we obey His commandments while not considering them burdensome. And that fulfills I John 5:3. And that's the joy that cannot be contained. That's when my joy becomes overflowing to others, just like when they turned and say would you explain to me the reason for the hope that is within you? The progressive pathway of the Christian is to overflow with joy to where people around us say, would you explain the reason for that joy that is within you that seems independent of the circumstances? Nehemiah 8:10 – the joy of the Lord is my strength. So listen closely to the transition here. Knowing His joy in me becomes His joy in me. It isn't something that we can create or work up to; it's something that we receive the revelation of and then we function in that revelation. So the knowledge of the revelation of the joy that God has in me becomes His joy in me. Joy can be defined as that euphoria, that overwhelming, extravagant, excessive sense of well being that flows from the one that is living in the knowledge of the love that God has for him.

Now the next little story will make the point. But it's an intuitive revelation; thus, it's not critical. It's not from the Word of God; it is testimonial. I was walking on my trails one time after being saved and my daughters were still adopting behaviors that were contrary to who I was now in Christ. And so I was kind of gritting my teeth to get a prayer out and was basically asking, Lord, why is it that they refuse to receive these revelations? And one of those (not audible voices) but one of those spontaneous intuitive revelations comes that you know is not the product of a natural mind, not the product of what your rational logical sequential analysis would provide; and the following revelation just exploded. It's because, Buddy, your daughters are joy seekers. When they see you experience more joy in Me than they experience in the world, they will come to Me through you. And I received in that instant that I was trying to harangue them with truth, but they couldn't process that truth; because the way they are made, they are seekers of joy—joyful little creatures. But they look at me as having something less than what they have; because I don't have the same level of joy in life that they have. So the world being the source of their joy at that time seemed far superior to whatever I had in my God because I didn't have the joy that they had. So the testimony for me to my daughters is to receive the revelation of the love and the joy that God has in me to progressively grow as that flows out of me to where they then will be provoked. Just as the Gentiles provoked the jealousy of the Jews, you see. When I have the joy in my heart overflowing extravagantly out of me, my daughters will be provoked to say, would you explain the reason for the joy that is within you? So my whole attitude toward how to witness to my girls changed. That didn't mean that I quit expressing truth, it meant that I quit relying on truth as my testimony when I was not yet walking in the abundant life with the fruit of the spirit in full manifestation; because that was going to be the testimony that would put the hook in them.

So the greatest manifestation of God's love is our salvation. That means being born again, being regenerated, passing from spiritual death to spiritual life. What could equal to that? But we can now live our lives by relishing our positions as eternal trophies of the grace of God. The expression of love is His grace; because a God Who is love cannot love fallen creatures who are unholy except He relate to them through His own grace to provide the means for us to come back into relationship with Him. So that's not just a fact; I mean that is revelation of the heart of God for us. He loved us that much. We are cloaked in the righteousness of Christ as per II Corinthians 5:21. We do have a new spirit and thank God we have an alive spirit, a spirit alive to God that can now say yes to God. That's a major part of the work of the grace of God in the life of the Christian is that God given new spirit alive to God that can experience pleasure in God.

Now when I used the term earlier, the crescendo of delight, this will be a bit of the Scriptural revelation of that. You know people speak of taking Scripture out of context and certainly that can carry a hazard. But I think that when not taking things out of context is taken to an infinite degree, you miss many spiritual revelations that are there for you from the Scripture. When you can read the Scripture Exodus 33:13, and read it just as part of the flow of what's taking place in the context. And that's wonderful, that's true and that's good. About the third time when I was reading through Exodus, as a Christian and I read this verse, I received a different revelation not dependent on the context. Moses is speaking to God. And he says the following:

1. If I have found favor in Thy sight
2. Let me know Thy ways
3. That I may know Thee
4. That I may find favor in Thy sight

If you look at it, you'll see that there's been a turn of the wheel made—that is to say, the part he departed from, if I have found favor in Thy sight, is where he comes back to, that I may find favor in Thy sight. But what I believe is being revealed here is the following. This is not a circle; this is a spiral. Because the more that he knows the ways of God, the more he knows God and the more he knows God, the more he will be a delight to God. So each turn of the circle goes higher and higher coming closer and closer to the face of God, you see. So this Scripture became a Scriptural basis for what I call the crescendo of delight because I believe that's how our relationship to God is to unfold.

Since our wills are designed to seek greater pleasure, they now seek more of God because God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. That's the most elementary of revelations in Hebrews 11:6. You're not going to come to God if you don't believe He is; and He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. So what is the reward of God? Well to me the best reward is in Genesis 15:1 in the King James Version. Other versions say you shall receive a great reward or your reward shall be exceeding great. But the King James says the one that I like – I shall be your great reward. Because in the final analysis, what reward can be greater than that Holy God of Genesis 1:1 being your great reward, you see? What could God give Abraham by way of reward that would approach giving him Himself? So God is a rewarder of those who seek Him and the reward of God is more of God. That's to enter the crescendo of delight with your creator God. And that is the

pathway of divine passion; that's the fuel for spiritual growth. That's when we can understand and agree with the Psalmist who wrote in Psalm 16:11 – in Thy presence is fullness of joy and at Thy right hand are pleasures forever. Our pleasure has now become the experience of His pleasure in us.

Another simple, natural story, not to make me appear saintly; but it's a real life phenomenon in our marital relationship and it makes a spiritual point. In our family room, we'll commonly eat dinner on TV trays while we watch the news. Well I have a nice recliner chair that has the elevated footrest. Susan tends to sit on the couch that has no reclining capability and has no footrest. So there's a separate ottoman. So, I put my tray aside, get out of the chair, go across the room, get the ottoman and put it over under Susan's feet. Well Susan now experiences pleasure. The lesser pleasure is she now has her feet elevated. But what's the greater pleasure? The greater pleasure is Susan's seeing me, delighting in going and getting the ottoman for her. So now she experiences two pleasures. One, the direct gift—the ottoman; secondly, the pleasure that she feels in having her husband care enough and be attentive enough and responsive enough to pay some little price to go retrieve the ottoman and place it under her feet. Well now, I see her delight in my delight in getting the ottoman. Well now she sees my delight in her delight in my delight in getting the ottoman. And this thing just keeps spiraling on. And that's how our relationship is to work with God. We see God's delight in us; then we delight in the fact that that omnipotent God of Genesis 1:1 delights in us. Then we see His delight in our delight in His delight, you see. And it's a never ending crescendo of delight once you focus on it properly.

See, we learned in Genesis that like begets like; that each reproduces after its own kind. But that's also true in the spiritual life of the Christian in the New Testament. Like begets like. If you know the delight that God has in you, it produces delight in you. And then your delight in your God's delight will produce delight in the heart of your brothers and sisters because it's contagious. But if we're not experiencing delight in God and His delight in us, we have nothing to give but legalism and rules. We cannot reproduce delight in the hearts of other if we're not experiencing the delight in our own hearts. And it isn't something that you create through your own positive thinking; it's something that you experience as you receive the revelation of the delight that God has in you. Because He didn't just get out of an easy chair and get the ottoman, this God gave up the glory of Heaven, came to Earth as a man, went through the horror of the cross, the forsakeness by the Father...all so He could reestablish a relationship with you. That's a little more than going across the room to get an ottoman. Can you see the delight that that God must have in you to pay that kind of a price to reestablish communion with you?

Then when we receive that revelation, we begin to manifest the new creation, not just through repression of the old creation. It becomes replacement through displacement; not just repression. It becomes not just Buddy saying, oh, I don't lust, I shall not lust—I shall not lust. It becomes experiencing the pleasure of God and seeing the smile that He has toward me as I am faithful toward my wife. Then my greater pleasure is the faithfulness to my wife and the delight I'm giving the heart of God to which the lust for another woman cannot compare with that pleasure, you see. So it isn't just trying not to lust, it's

walking in the pleasure principle, entering the crescendo of delight with your Holy God and then walking that out to bring pleasure to His heart. So heretofore in our spiritual immaturity, we operated under the following unspoken and mistaken assumption. That someday when I become spiritually mature, then I will become more fervent and then I will enjoy God. But now we begin to more correctly see: I know the love that God has for me. I know the pleasure that He experiences in me. I have pleasure in that pleasure, I enjoy God and that pleasure in God fans the flame of passion for more of God. And that passion is what propels you to spiritual maturity. So on the one hand, we try to work up to pleasure; but now we receive this revelation we experience pleasure and work up to Christlikeness through that pleasure. It's a different polarity, if you will.

Before we considered salvation in its focal sense as an event in the past that marked when we first had saving faith in Jesus Christ. And that's certainly true in regard to our destiny in Heaven, to our justification, to our positional sanctification. But now we should begin to see salvation more globally and it was certainly an event; but it is also a process; because what's now being saved is my unrenewed mind that's being transformed to loose the mind of Christ rather than my unrenewed mind. And then we understand why Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12 for us to work out our salvation. See, it's the revelation of the love that God has in providing your salvation that you work out. It means work out a task yet to be completed; but it also means to work out to learn to express all that's wrapped up in that initial salvation experience and why it occurred and how it occurred. So you're working out the indwelling, as opposed to trying to create something on your own. So saving faith is necessary of course. It is wonderful. But now we should begin to kindle the flames a little bit to hunger for transcendent faith that transcends every human circumstance. Well, what faith is that? As in all things, the answer is Jesus Christ. It's the faith of Jesus Christ as He transcended the ultimate circumstance and all of you now can reply to me in your minds as to what that ultimate circumstance was. It was Jesus living by faith in the Father, while forsaken by the Father, while receiving the fullness of wrath of the Father; because there is no test greater than that test.

Remember the gaps. The gap for us is standing in the gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be according to the will of God. But God Himself, stands in the gap. Jesus stands in the gap between my righteousness and the righteousness of God. The Holy Spirit stands in the gap between what I can do and what God calls me to do. So, we simply do the following and it'll have to be my last comment for today. Romans 13:14 Paul wrote – put on the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, we don't work out our salvation by improving the flesh. We work out our salvation by putting on Jesus Christ. When we put on the armor of God, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Word, gird our loins with truth and feet with the gospel of peace; well, what we're in effect doing is putting on Jesus Christ. Because He is our faith, He is our salvation, and He is our righteousness, He is our peace, He is our truth, you see. So Romans 13:14 is all that we do from then on as we work out our salvation. It's learning Who Jesus is, what He did, why He did it, what it means, and then working that out, if you will for the rest of our lives on planet Earth as Christians. And we'll pick it up there next time. So thank you for listening.