

Assurance of Salvation

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[0 : 00] Luke 23, beginning verse 32.

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Let him save himself if this is God's Messiah, the Chosen One. The soldiers also mocked him. They came offering him sour wine and said, If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.

An inscription was above him, This is the King of the Jews. Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at him. Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us.

But the other answered rebuking him, Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? We are punished justly because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did.

[1 : 21] But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And he said to him, Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.

Let's pray. Dear Holy Father, I just thank you again for this beautiful morning that you've given us. Father, I thank you for another day. Father, I thank you for this opportunity to proclaim your word, to proclaim your truth.

And Father, I pray that you would decrease me so that you would increase. Father, I pray that the words that come out of my mouth do not come from me, but come from you. Father, I just thank you so much for how good you are to me.

Your grace and mercy upon me. And Father, I pray for salvation this morning for anyone in this room or anyone that is watching this service that does not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, that they will come to the understanding of what Christ did.

And Father, I thank you for allowing that to happen so that we can have a relationship with you. Father, I just thank you and love you. It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. As I look at the Scripture, and when a pastor asked me if I would be willing to come up and preach, and I love sharing God's word, but the thing about it with me is that I'm not educated, but I have the Holy Spirit.

[2 : 47] And I'm so thankful for the Holy Spirit that I can stand up and proclaim. And it's amazing how good our God is.

And we're going to look at this here in a second, but I trust that you all had good Thanksgivings. And I did. I had four, I believe, in the past couple weeks.

And on Thursday, my family came over, and Nikki and I hosted. And after dinner, we were playing some games, and my mom likes to bring games to bring everybody in, and one was charades.

And so we had these little bitty cards. It doesn't say much on them. It just says a few words. And what comes to my mind is we put so much faith into this card, and we've got to act this out, and we rely on this little card and the words that this card says.

But if we don't understand what it says, we're lost. We're a little foolish. And I saw that a couple of times on Thursday. And it's because sometimes we don't understand what the card is saying.

[4 : 08] Sometimes, like my younger nieces, they didn't quite understand what some of the words said, and so they did their best. And my mom, Nan, she helped them out.

And so, if we don't understand what that card says, again, we look a little foolish. And as I was trying to, when I was reading the Scripture, I was thinking of an illustration, and I look at these two men on the cross here with Jesus, they're both in the same position.

They're both equal. They're both equal in their sin and in their punishment. They're both equal in their sin and punishment.

And I kind of struggled with the title for this sermon because I'm not good at that stuff. Again, I'm not educated like Pastor is.

And so, I kind of struggled with these things, but what kept coming to my mind was assurance of salvation. And I pray that as we get into this more, as we look into it more, that you as a brother and sister will come to a better understanding of salvation and how we can see it in these two lives. [5 : 24] of these men on the cross with Christ. In verse 39, it says, one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at Him.

Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us. So often we overlook this guy. We see that He is at a point to where He is on the cross.

He's mocking. It tells us He's mocking. Jesus. It tells us all these people are mocking Jesus. And He keeps mocking Him to His very last breath. But we also see here, there is a possibility.

There's a possibility that He can be saved. He's looking for salvation. But when we look at what He is saying, save yourself and us. Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us. He's looking for salvation from His current situation.

He's looking for salvation from His current situation. If we can be honest, that's how we treat the Lord.

[6 : 42] Maybe that's how we've, that's how our Christian walk has been focused on and our walk with Christ. That's how, that's what it's been, that's what it's hinged on was what can God do for me?

In times of trouble, where do I go first? I'll go to Christ. And it's only when, when times of trouble. If we can be honest with ourselves, maybe you've been in the past. Maybe you're there right now. When it gets tough, when it gets tough, is that the only time you go to the Lord?

The reason I'm bringing this up is because this is the wrong mindset. Again, He's looking for a Messiah. He's looking for a Savior. But He's looking for a Savior from His current circumstance. And when we get into this situation of crying out to the Lord, help me, save me from this situation, we often come away, we're not hearing from God at all. We're not hearing from God at all.

[7 : 46] Is it possible because our hearts aren't right? See, if Jesus was who a lot of people thought He was, was some kind of a Savior, and if He truly wasn't the Son of God, He could have said, alright man, I'll help you get off this cross.

And He would help the other guy get off the cross. Both criminals get off the cross. But, but He saw the man's heart.

So if you're in the same situation, you're crying out, if you are the Messiah, save me. Save me from this issue. But He knows your heart.

He knows your heart. How in the world do we get to this point of this is how we treat the Lord? How we treat Him as, yes, Lord and Savior, but it comes to a point to where it's only Savior from the current situation.

How do we get to that point? We get to that point because you're putting yourself first. first.

Because when you put yourself first, the rest of the time, you're not pursuing Him.

[9 : 17] The rest of the time, you're not pursuing the Lord. We get in these situations because we're in a society of it's all about me.

And you've heard Pastor Mike talk about it. We have all these social media platforms and it's all about getting a like. It's all about getting comments. It's all about what is everybody saying to me? So this criminal, save yourself and us. He was looking out for himself. His heart wasn't right. And so often, as Christians, we get into this mindset of it's not Christianity.

It is not Christianity. And we see how this guy's mindset is totally off. Totally off. In Acts 8, verse 13, talking about Simon the sorcerer, it says, even Simon himself believed.

And after he was baptized, he followed Philip everywhere and was amazed as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed. Skip down to verse 18.

[10 : 38] When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, give me this power also so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.

Peter. But Peter told him, may your silver be destroyed with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. You have no part or share in this matter because your heart is not right before God.

Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that if possible, your heart's intent may be forgiven. For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by wickedness.

Pray to the Lord for me, Simon replied, so that nothing you have said may happen to me. So after they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they traveled back to Jerusalem preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

We see Simon the sorcerer, but we also see so many professing Christians. He said he believed. [11:49] Scripture says Simon believed. He was also baptized. A lot of us are in that same boat. See, that's the beginning of it.

That's the beginning of this relationship. That's the beginning of our new eternity. But again, we see Simon's heart. Simon the sorcerer. His heart wasn't right.

As Christians, as professing Christians, we need to look at ourselves. We need to look at our hearts. And the Bible tells us to do that. The Bible tells us to do that.

That if we're professing Christians, and if we're just like Simon, we say we believe, and we've been baptized, his heart still wasn't right even though he did those things.

A lot of people are in that same boat. A lot of people who say they're Christians. A lot of Christians have, for example, Falls Creek. I love Falls Creek.

[13:06] I love that place. But also, after taking many students down there after many years, that I also understand that what happens there can be emotional.

Emotional. You can have an experience of great emotion. You can have an experience of singing these songs of worship and hearing a message and you're seeing all of these students go forward making decisions.

And then you happen to see students say, oh, my friend's going, I better go too. I better go too. If they're doing it, it must be good. Church, we need to understand.

Brothers and sisters, we need to understand that just because we say we believe, just because we've been baptized, yes, that's part of it.

[14:11] But I've seen it many times to where that's where it stops, that's where it begins, and that's where it stops. You don't see the fruits of the Spirit within some of these lives.

verse 13 says, Simon followed Philip everywhere and was amazed at the signs and miracles.

He was following because of the signs and miracles. He wasn't following because his eternity had been changed, his heart had been changed.

He was following because of what was being performed in front of him. Again, not because his life had just been changed. His eternity had just been changed.

But because of something that he could profit from. How do we know that he wasn't saved? How do we know that he didn't receive salvation?

[15:20] We look and we see Peter here. Peter's telling him what's wrong with him. Verse 18 and 19, Simon wanted to buy the ability to give the power of the Holy Spirit.

He wanted to buy. He wanted to buy. Verse 20. Peter told him, may your silver be destroyed with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money.

Verse 21, you have no part or share in this matter because your heart is not right before God.

Again, just like the criminal on the cross, his heart wasn't right because he wanted salvation from the moment, from the pain.

his heart wasn't right. When we look at Simon the sorcerer here, he said he believed. He was baptized. But his heart wasn't right.

Peter tells him to pray so that the Lord's wrath wouldn't be brought down upon him. And again, we see evidence that his heart wasn't right because he says, would you pray for me that this wouldn't happen?

[16:52] It happens so often today in the church to where we say we've made a decision, we've made a profession of faith.

faith. We believe that Jesus died, that he was raised from the grave, and we get baptized, but our life does not show any difference.

But our life does not show any difference. See, the Bible tells us there's a mark of difference. Look at Apostle Paul. Before he met Jesus, his sin was killing Christians, putting them in jail, beating them.

But after he met Jesus, he was telling people about Jesus. See, that's what we should look like.

That's what we should look like.

There's a difference from who we were before to who we are now in Christ. And again, our hearts.

[18 : 08] God knows our heart. We can go to everybody in this room and say, I'm a Christian, I'm a Christian. We can go like, yeah, good job. But we've got to deal with the reality that God knows our heart.

We've got to deal with the reality that if we are truly of God, that our lives will show it. Our lives will bear fruit for the kingdom.

Simon heard the message. Simon the sorcerer who was full of sin heard the message, heard the gospel, but he never got it because his heart was on the signs and the miracles and being able to give people the power of the Holy Spirit.

His heart wasn't right. Amen. Have you once said you believed, but your belief never turned into trust and the trust turned into obedience.

Obedience. As your belief that Christ died for your sins, as your belief that He rose from the grave turned into a trust in God that turns into obedience to God.

[19 : 39] See, when you become obedient to God, you begin to look different from the world. You begin to look different from the world. Because the world hates us. The world hates Christ.

See, the world, if you watch TV enough, I'll be honest, I'm thankful that Nicky and I, we don't have TV much of the year. We get it starting in October for Hallmark Christmas movies.

I'm one of those guys. Nicky will fix dinner. What do you want to watch? Hallmark Christmas movies. I like them.

I'll admit it. But this world, if you watch TV enough, all it does is give you sin. It glorifies sin. It glorifies sin.

Everything about the world is sin. Because right now, it's ruled by Satan. And if your life goes along with the world, you need to examine your heart if you're a professing believer.

[20 : 57] You know, I was just like Simon the Sorcerer. I believed. I was baptized.

And then, I got off track. Then I started to wander. And then as I began, then the Lord began speaking to me and He began to get me into His Word because He wanted to talk to me.

And as God wanted to talk to me, I opened His Word and He pointed me to this Scripture. Matthew 7 verses 21-23 says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, do many miracles in Your name? Then I will announce to them, I never knew You.

Depart from Me, you lawbreakers. See, the Lord wanted to speak to me and He spoke to me through this Scripture here. These three verses.

[22 : 13] Though it's only three verses, it changed my life. Because at that moment, just like Simon the sorcerer, I believed, I was baptized.

As I read the Scripture, as the Lord revealed this to me, He says, I thought my eternity was safe. But as I read the Scripture, I got scared.

I realized my eternity wasn't safe. Because Jesus says here, only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. The will of the Father, the will of God in heaven looks so much different than what you see in the world today.

If your life looks so much more like the world, again, the will of the Father in heaven looks so much different than what the world looks like.

If you look more like the world, you need to examine your heart. I'm thankful for Scripture. I'm thankful that God has kept it the same since it was put down on paper.

[23 : 21] I know they didn't type it, but however they did it, since it was put down, it stayed the same. The Lord has kept it the same for a reason, because He is sovereign. Because His Word is truth.

Because His Word is life-giving. And as I read the Scripture, I became afraid. I remember reading. I remember sitting there reading that. Thinking I was doing good because I was reading God's Word. And all of a sudden, I was like, I don't even know if I'm one of His.

That's how it hit me. Am I doing God's will? Am I in the will of God? Am I doing what He wants me to do?

Am I doing what He's called me to do as a believer, as His child? Am I in His will? That's all I could think about for a long time.

[24 : 28] That's all I could think about because I was scared. because I saw heaven as something to keep me out of hell.

Which, that's the truth. There's two eternities. One heaven, one hell. But I saw heaven as, if I believe and if I just be baptized, it'll keep me out of there.

And then again, I read God's Word. Only those who do the will of the Father in heaven. The will of the Father.

I think about the will of the Father. It can be a daunting thing when you begin to think about it. But again, I'm thankful for Scripture because it tells us what the will of the Father is.

And I think about when I was young, my dad's sitting over here. As I've grown up, gotten bigger, my dad is a smaller guy.

[25 : 45] But he was always the biggest guy. When he said something, I made sure to do it. I made sure to do it. If I didn't, I got weapons.

And I'm thankful for that. But when you think about that, if you've had a father the same way that brought you up the way you're supposed to, the way he brought me up in a godly home, and he told me what was right and wrong, and if I did wrong, I paid for it.

But with God, we don't always see the wrath at the moment. And because we don't see the wrath at the moment of not being obedient to God, of not living in His will, we continue to not live in His will.

And before you know it, we are not in God's will at all. But there's wrath. There is wrath.

Only the ones who do the will of the Father in heaven. Matthew 22, 36-40 says, Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?

[27 : 02] He said to him, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.

All the law and the prophets depend on these two commands. If you are a believer, if you profess your faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, are you truly loving God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind?

Are you truly loving Him the way He loves you? That's God's will for you to love Him.

That's God's will for you to love Him. When you love Him like He deserves, your life will begin to look different.

Because when you love somebody, you don't want to hurt them. You want to do everything that they say because you love them and you care for them.

[28 : 08] Do you love God the way He deserves and the way He calls us to as His children? And are you loving those around you? Like so.

Matthew 28, 18-20 says, Jesus came near and said to them, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.

Are you making disciples? Are you teaching the ways of Christ? This is also God's will to make disciples and to teach the ways of Christ.

This is God's will. So far, so far we have two ways of knowing if we're in God's will.

[29 : 20] Are you loving God? Does your life show it? Are you making disciples? Are you teaching the ways of Christ? Are you that example of Christ?

Are you that example of Christ? Romans 12, 1 and 2 says, Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern what is good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

What is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God? Are you pursuing God's will for your life? Are you pursuing earthly pleasures?

Are you holy and pleasing to God? By the things you think, by the things you do, by the things you say, are you holy and pleasing to God?

[30 : 27] God. This says this is how we will know God's will for our life.

It says God's will is perfect. I believe it so. I believe it so. I believe it so. So if you look at the Scripture in Matthew 7, it says only those who do the will of My Father in Heaven.

If God is speaking to you through that Scripture, and you're saying, what's God's will? Here we go. Let's start with these. Let's start with these. Are you loving God with your whole self?

Are you loving those around you? Are you making disciples and teaching the ways of Christ? Are you pursuing God's will for your life? Are you holy and pleasing to God? 1 John 3, 4-10 says, Everyone who commits sin practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

[31 : 46] You know that He was revealed so that He may take up away sins, and there is no sin in Him. Everyone who remains in Him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him.

Little children, let no one deceive you. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous. The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose to destroy the devil's work. Everyone who has been born of God does not sin because His seed remains in Him. He is not able to sin because he has been born of God.

This is how God's children and the devil's children become obvious. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother and sister. Verse 1 and verse 4 says, everyone who commits sin practices lawlessness.

Yes, as Christians, we will sin, but what this is talking about, and you go back and look deeper into it, what it's talking about, those people who habitually sin, who sin with purpose, you wake up and say, I'm going to sin today.

[32 : 53] You may not say that to yourself, but what you do, that's what you do. Everyone who practices, who commits sin, and practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

If you say you believe and been baptized, like Simon, and you continue to sin habitually on a daily basis, there's a good chance salvation isn't there.

Salvation was never there. If at one point you said, yes, I believe, I've been baptized, but your life has never shown the fruits of the Spirit, and you continually live in sin, purposely living in sin, most likely there was no salvation there.

This is what God's Word is saying. Not what I'm saying, but what God's Word is saying. This is how we know God's children and the devil's children.

Whoever does not do what is right is not of God. Especially the one who does not love his brother or sister. If you live your life in sin, you're not of God.

[34 : 28] You're not one of His. So how do we bring this back to the criminal who was mocking Christ?

Just as the criminal, just as the criminal is mocking Jesus and asking to be saved from His punishment, and like Simon, and like me, we were looking for salvation from our current circumstances.

But what Christ did on the cross in His resurrection, is so much more than your current circumstance. So much more. We deal so much in our current circumstance.

And I get it. I've had many of those moments where how do I keep doing it? But what Christ did on the cross in His resurrection was so much more than this current circumstance.

It's eternal. What Christ did, He's eternal. See, just like Simon the sorcerer, again, just like Simon the sorcerer, just like the man on the cross, hearts weren't right.

[36 : 04] God knows our hearts. And as I continue to dwell on what Jesus did for me, what He did at the cross, everything that He went through, everything that He proclaimed, it's mind-boggling to think about He did that for me and to think about being justified before God because of what Christ did and because He changed my life and because I believe and I finally became obedient.

and it's so hard to believe but when I, you know, when I think about Christ being what He did was eternal even though the guy was looking for a current circumstance Savior, and as you begin to live in Christ, you begin to have the mindset of Christ which is eternal.

So do you have an eternal mindset? Do you have a kingdom mindset? Do you have a kingdom mindset? In Matthew 16, 21-23, it says, from then on, Jesus began to point out to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Oh no, Lord, this will never happen to you. Jesus turned and told Peter, get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me because you're not thinking about God's concerns but human's concerns.

Again, the whole Savior for the current circumstance is self-centered. It's all about my concerns, human's concerns. It's not about God's concerns, heavenly concerns.

[38 : 20] I've often found myself, what would Jesus say to me in this circumstance? And sometimes He would, and I would be honest with myself. I'd have to be honest with myself and He would tell me, get behind me, Satan.

He would rebuke me in the same way for doing what I had been doing. But again, I'm thankful for God's Word that it pierced me.

It hurt me. But it healed me. Amen. So all this goes back to the man on the cross, to the criminal on the cross who was mocking Jesus, who was mocking Him to His last words.

And going back to the title of assurance of salvation, this man was not assured of his salvation. He was assured of his eternity in hell.

Amen. We're going back to Luke 23 verses 40-43. But the other answered, rebuking him, don't you even fear God since you are undergoing the same punishment?

[39 : 40] We are punished justly because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And he said to him, truly I tell you, today, you will be with me in paradise. That's assurance of salvation. In Matthew and Mark, they give us the same picture, but in their picture, it says both men, both criminals, were mocking Jesus.

But Luke here, he gives us the rest of the picture. He finishes the picture for us. It's where in Luke's picture, finishing the story, as they both, criminals, were mocking Jesus while they were on the cross, this criminal realized.

This criminal realized who Jesus was. see, this criminal, he had an understanding of God.

He had an understanding that he was under God's wrath before his sin. He had an understanding of God. Verse 41 says, he admits, he admits his sin.

[41 : 05] He admits a sin that he's been in. And he also admits that he's been punished justly for it according to the law of that time.

In verse 42, it tells us he recognizes the lordship and asks Jesus to remember him. So what's the difference between the two criminals?

They both ask for salvation. They both ask for salvation. One says, save yourself and us. And this one admits his sin, admits he's being punished justly, but he also admits that he realizes who Jesus was.

What the difference is, Jesus sold their hearts. This man didn't ask for salvation from the current circumstance.

He asked for salvation for eternity. it gives me chills to read about a man who admits his sin, recognizes the lordship of Jesus, and asked Jesus to remember him.

[42 : 46] Jesus could have said, man, be quiet. I'm hurting too. Leave me alone. Let me die in peace.

That's how I may have acted. I probably would have acted if I was on that cross. But no, Jesus, being the savior of the world, says, today, you will be with me in paradise.

Today, you will be with me in paradise. He was dying a criminal in the eyes of everybody there.

But at that moment, Jesus said, today, you will be with me in paradise. He was no longer a criminal. He was blessed.

He was chosen. He was adopted. And He was redeemed. Because His heart was right before the Lord.

[44 : 12] Blessed, chosen, adopted, redeemed. And He was redeemed. And the world tells us much differently from this. The world tells us you're not good enough.

The world tells us you need to work harder. But Jesus says, recognize me and I'll redeem you. today, today, you'll be with me. That's the assurance of salvation right there.

Blessed, adopted, redeemed. Ephesians 2, verses 1-9 and says, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedience.

We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts. And we were by nature children under wrath as others were also.

[45 : 33] But God, who was rich in mercy because of His great love that He had for us made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses, you were saved by grace.

He also raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavens in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For you are saved by grace through faith. And this is not from yourselves, but it's God's gift. Not from works so that no one can boast.

For you are saved by grace through faith. And this is not from yourselves, it's God's gift. See, the criminal found salvation on the cross.

He found it because of God's grace. God's gift of salvation. So have you truly accepted God's grace as gift?

[46 : 50] I ask this question because we're going into the Christmas season and as a Christmas season, we often get gifts. And if we'll be honest, sometimes it's hard for us to receive a gift.

And we think we have to give back a gift. For whatever reason, we're too proud to receive a gift. If you can't receive a gift from somebody, a friend, or a loved one, how are you going to receive God's grace?

God's grace. when you begin to understand God's grace and when you begin to really get a grasp of it, then you really begin to receive an eternal mindset, the heavenly mindset.

And then when you get that heavenly mindset, then you begin to love God with your heart, soul, and mind. God's grace is growing. Then you begin to become obedient to God because your love for Him is growing.

Then you become more holy and pleasing to God. Even though you're doing these things, if you're pursuing God, it's nothing about you, but it's all about God's grace showing to us through Jesus Christ.

[48 : 24] because of what He did on the cross, but because God raised Him from the grave.

I can't help but keep thinking about what Jesus said to Him. Truly, I tell you, today you'll be with me in paradise. This man had lived a life full of sin, but the moment Jesus saw his heart was right before him, He says, you're going to be with me.

I claim you. You're going to be with me today. We're leaving this earth, you're going to be with me. Can Christ say that about you today? Would He say that to you today?

And as you know, we're not promised our next breath. God, we're going to be with you today. But if we truly lived with eternal mindset, if we truly lived loving God, we would know Jesus would say that to us if that was us today.

[50 : 08] He would tell us today, today, you'll be with me in paradise. But first, do you treat God as your current situation fixer?

You need to deal with that first. If that's the way you see God, if that's the way you treat Him, I encourage you to get right before God today.

If you're a believer, if you say you've been saved by Jesus' blood, but that's how you treat God as your fixer, you need to get right before Him today.

I encourage you to. I encourage you to. And again, I'm thankful that He showed me His Word. That He showed me that I wasn't going to be in heaven because I wasn't doing the will of God.

Just like Simon, again, I said I was, I believed, I was baptized, I had it all wrong. But because of God's Word and His grace, He showed me how I was wrong.

[51 : 37] But He showed me how to fix it. God is speaking to you this morning. And you realize that's where you are as a believer.

That if you were to stand before God today and what Jesus vouchs for you, would He say you're one of mine? It's okay. That one's one of mine.

that one's one of mine. But Jesus vouchs for you. But if God's speaking to you this morning and is saying if you've never had a relationship with God, if you're living a life full of sin and God is speaking to you and He's drawing you to Him, if you've never made a decision to profess Jesus as your Lord and Savior, today is the day of salvation because of God's grace, His gift.

So do you need to get right before God this morning? Brothers and sisters in Christ, do you need to get right before God? And if you do, I would encourage you to come forward. You don't have to pray with me.

You can get down on your knees and cry to the Lord. He'll see your heart. He'll see if you're being real about it. And that's all that matters. That's why He knows.

[53 : 11] I pray that you would get right before God. As my brother and sister in Christ, I pray that you would get right before God. because you can see what He has for you.

You can see the will that He has for your life. But if you've never, if you're just now hearing about Jesus, never heard about Jesus, know as I've talked about this morning, He was on the cross. He died on the cross. All because He said, that He was the Savior of the world. That He was God. People hated Him for that.

The Jews hated Him for that. They wanted Him dead. They got their wish. But that was all part of God's plan. Because Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for us.

As broken people. As sinners. He was the perfect sacrifice. It's only through Christ that you can have a relationship with God. And it's only because of Jesus that I can do, that I can stand up here.

[54 : 25] I'm an introvert. But I want you to know it's not just making a decision and saying, yes, I believe. Yes, I'll get baptized.

It's so much more than that. He'll transform your life. He'll show you a love that you've never experienced before. That you will never experience here on earth from a person. But He wants to change your life.

He wants to transform you. He wants to love on you. He wants to bring you out of your sin to keep you out of whatever you're doing, out of that trouble. He wants to bring you out of that. He wants to redeem you.

If you're saying, I need to get cleaned up. No, He's going to do it. You can't clean yourself up. He'll do the cleaning if you'll let Him. That's why Jesus came here. That's why Jesus died on that cross some 2,000 years ago.

For you, for me. For everyone. And after He died, He was put in a tomb. But glory to God, three days later, He rose from that grave.

[55 : 28] We have victory. We have victory. And if He's calling you into a relationship with Him for the very first time, here in a minute, after I pray, I'm going to be standing down here.

We'll be singing a song of invitation. See, if you've made that decision, if God has called you into a relationship with Him, and you say yes, and if you've made that decision already, He knows it in your heart.

But if you've made that decision, I want you to come forward and tell me about it. Because we, as Highland Park Baptist Church, a body of believers in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, we want to rejoice with you.

we want to be excited with you. And then when you come forward, I want to pray with you. I want to pray with you.

If you've made the decision, I want to pray with you that you're starting a new life. You have a new eternity. You have, this is just the beginning. It's a new life.

[56 : 32] I want to pray with you. See, that's the thing about it is that so many times in church we say, pray this prayer. No. We don't see that in the Bible.

We see repentance of sin. Turning away from our sin and going towards God. Loving Him with everything that we have. And we see that's how we receive salvation because of Jesus Christ. is that we turn away from our sin and go towards God.

So that's why I say if you've already made that decision, if God has called you into a relationship with Him this morning, most likely, that's already been made. And if you've made that, come forward.

Cameron, would you come up? Would everybody stand? I'm going to pray.

Our dear only Father, I come to You this morning. Father, I thank You for Your grace, Your mercy, Your love, but also being a just God.

[57 : 43] Father, I thank You for being a God who does not want us to continue to sin. Father, You give us a newness of life. You make us a new creation that we can turn away from everything that drags us down.

But because of Jesus and because of what You did by raising Him from the grave, He is our Savior. Father, I pray if there's any in this room that has made that decision, they will come forward so that we can rejoice with them.

That we can help disciple them. But Father, if there's any brothers and sisters in here that don't hold You in the right mindset, that don't love You like You call us to love You, that You deserve.

Father, I pray that You would call them into repentance. And Father, I just pray that at that moment, they would fill Your love and Your restoration.
Father, help us all keep each other accountable to being who we're called to be in You. It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Thank you.