

## **Back to Basics: The Gospel Plan of Salvation (Part 2)**

On the Day of Pentecost, Simon Peter stood up before a crowd of Jews from around the world and proclaimed a message that literally changed the lives of 3,000 men that day. It is also a message that has continued to reverberate down the halls of time and is as fresh today as it was 2,000 years ago when it was first delivered. The message Peter preached that day was God's precious plan of salvation. In just a few verses, Peter was able, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to declare the message that can change the life of everyone who hears it and receives it. It is a message that has not changed, nor lost its power. It is a message that still brings hope to the hopeless, life to those dead in sin and forgiveness to those struggling under the burden of their sins. This evening, I would like to share this message with you once again. I want to preach for a while on God's precious plan of salvation.

Maybe you have heard this message before and when you did, you received it and believed it and acted upon it through obedient faith and were saved. Maybe you heard it and refused it then, but maybe you will be ready to receive it this evening. Perhaps you have never heard it. As striking a thought as that is, there are men and women in this area who have never heard God's Gospel plan of salvation. Oh, they have heard the meanderings of some socially motivated minister. They have heard the drivel dispensed by many denominations. They have heard some list of dos and don'ts, and they have tried to keep it! But, these people have never really heard God's Gospel plan of salvation! I want you to know this evening that it is His plan. It is not my plan, it is not some man-made creed, it is not some plan manufactured in this desolate thing I call a mind. Oh, no! It is a plan that is as old as God Himself, but one that is as fresh as the new day. It is a plan that you need to hear and a plan about which you must make a decision. It is this plan, God's Gospel plan of salvation which occupies my mind this evening. It is that plan that I long to share with you. Please look with me at our text this evening and let's hear again God's Gospel plan of salvation.

This morning we began our series of back to the basics lessons. If you recall, we started out by showing how one has to be convicted of sin and to see the need of a Savior before we can do anything about getting a person into a saved condition. But as Jesus taught there were going to be few people who were saved, and I believe this is mainly due to a lack of conviction or belief that there is any moral standard.

Secondly, we showed how God wants us to be righteous because he is righteous.

Thirdly, we demonstrated how it is the Lord, and the Lord only, who adds anyone to His church, which is His body. One cannot separate being saved from being in Christ, and in His church, which is His body, for they are all one and the same.

Fourthly, we explained how we are saved by God's grace through faith, and that one has to have faith in Jesus Christ and God in order to ever be well-pleasing to Him.

We then noted how James the brother of the Lord tells us faith without works is a dead faith, producing nothing.

From there we showed how we must proceed in our faith by having true repentance for our sins in order to be saved.

Lastly, we showed how confession of Jesus Christ as our Lord is also a part of the Gospel plan of salvation. It was there we were left in the desert with Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch to see if confession alone was the point in which we could be said to be saved. Let's read the entire story about these two men to find the answer. It is found in Acts 8:26-39.

**"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.**

**"Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.'**

**"So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'**

**"And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away. And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the Earth.'**

**"So the eunuch answered Philip and said, 'I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?'**

**"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.**

**"Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?'**

**"Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.'**

**“And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”**

The Ethiopian eunuch's faith was strong enough to lead him to baptism. Let's consider 6 important points about this story.

We can learn the following things from the story we just read in Acts 8:

1. The Ethiopian eunuch traveled a great distance (hundreds of miles) to worship at Jerusalem. He was studying the word of God. He was not saved just because he was a very religious person.
2. Sometimes we are unable to understand certain Scripture without guidance.
3. The eunuch requested to be baptized though it does not say Philip told him anything about baptism. This is one occasion in which a logical inference can and even must be made, which is that we **must** conclude that baptism was covered when one ***"preached Jesus"*** in the first century.
4. The eunuch felt an urgent need to be baptized immediately.
5. If first century baptism was sprinkling or pouring, it would not have been necessary for Philip and the eunuch to go "down into the water."
6. The eunuch was not "rejoicing" until after his baptism. So what does that say?

The Old Testament Book of Isaiah was written about 700 years before Christ was born. Let's see what the eunuch learned from the passage he was reading in Isaiah 53 by reading the whole chapter.

**<sup>1</sup> Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?**

**<sup>2</sup> For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.**

**<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

**<sup>4</sup> Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**

**<sup>5</sup> But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.**

**<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

**<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.**

**<sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.**

**<sup>9</sup> And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.**

**<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.**

**<sup>11</sup> He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.**

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

Because of our sin against God, man deserves punishment by death. Christ took our place because of His love for us. The sins of the whole world were nailed to the cross. Christ suffered for us and He died a horrible, cruel death. He was buried, but was resurrected to a new life (without the sins) on the third day. Our sins are taken away if we are washed in His blood. As we are told in 1 Peter 2:24 and Revelation 7:14,

***“ . . . Who His own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed. These are they that come of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”***

How do we take advantage of this free gift (sacrifice) from God? How do we get our sins taken away? Different men have different opinions about this important issue. We can **know** our sins are washed away only by doing what the Bible tells us.

Acts 2:36-39 says,

**“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

**“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’**

**“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”**

REPENT + BAPTISM = "Remission of sins"

Mark 16:15-16 says,

**“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*”**

FAITH (or Belief) + BAPTISM = "Saved"

Paul wrote in Galatians 3:26-28,

**“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

BAPTISM = "Put on Christ"

You are inside a coat when you put on a coat. If you ***"put on Christ"*** in baptism, you are then inside the body of Christ, which means you are saved.

***"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*** This is what Ananias told Saul in Acts 22:16.

BAPTISM = "Wash away sins"

The blood of Christ washes away sins at baptism. Therefore, our sins are not taken away until we are baptized.

1 Peter 3:20-22 (RSV) says,

**“ . . . who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. *Baptism*, which corresponds to this, *now saves you*, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.”**

BAPTISM = "Saves"

We are saved through the ***"resurrection of Jesus."***

Paul wrote in Romans 6:3-8,

***“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,”***

Once you have crucified your old ways (sins) when you ***repent***, the dead person must be buried. ***Baptism***, a watery grave, corresponds to the burial and resurrection of Christ. This is the Biblical way to be born again, a new person free from sin. As Paul wrote in Galatians 5:24 and 2 Timothy 2:11,

***“And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. Faithful is the saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him:”***

Even after crossing the line of salvation, we must continue in His word to remain His disciples. (John 8:31)

After baptism we must continue to walk in the light so that the blood of Jesus may continually cleanse us from sin. (1 John 1:7)

God promises to give us the eternal crown of life only if we remain faithful to Jesus all of our lives. (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22)

You cannot enter Heaven unless you do God's will. (Matthew 7:21)

If you love the Lord you will keep His commandments. (John 14:15)

Jesus is the source of **"eternal salvation to all who obey Him."** (Hebrews 5:9)

We must obey from the heart the form (pattern) of doctrine which the Bible delivers. (Romans 6:17)

The Gospel is the Good News that Jesus died for sin, was buried and raised, never to die again. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

We obey that pattern when we put to death our sinful way and are buried in water, raised to walk in a new life. (Romans 6:4)

Christ died for the lost.

Salvation comes by the blood of Jesus.

We are saved only after we are washed in His blood.

God does not wish that any should perish.

*If you died today, would you live forever in Heaven with Jesus?* (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

The Bible is clear.

**"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."** (Romans 6:23)

If this is the truth, then obey it.

**"The truth shall make you free."** (John 8:32)

Man's opinions will not set you free. Jesus said in Matthew 15:9, **"But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."** Men will fail you. Only the Lord will save you.