

SALVATION 03

THESE ARE THE FACTS

By Winkie Pratney

God Loves You

He made you. He knows how you feel. He understands all your problems. He knows your background. He knows your name. And God loves you and wants you to have the best for your life. Everything God does, He does out of love. His love is not just a good feeling about His Universe, but an unselfish choice to will our highest good. "Herein is love; not the we loved God, but that He loves US and sent His Son to be the way through which we could be forgiven and come back to Him."

Sin Has Come Between You and God

Sin is really selfishness; a "me first" attitude of heart and life. It is denying God's right to be God in your life. It is breaking His laws, and scorning His guidelines for happiness. It is putting yourself first, above everyone else; living first of all to serve and please you instead of God, and refusing to treat all others according to their rightful place and value in the Universe. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil..."
"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

God Hates Sin Because It Costs So Much

Sin is the cause of all the heartache in our world. God didn't plan sin. He never plans unhappiness. He wants man to be happy and free. Sin is the reason why there is pain, misery, and death in our land. Sin enslaves us to our feelings instead of allowing us to do what is right and reasonable. Sin makes us feel guilty and afraid and alone. Sin is the most expensive thing in the Universe.

It cost God His only Son.

It cost Jesus Christ His life.

God, who must be just, can never allow sin to go unpunished, or the universe would begin to collapse in evil. When God's infinitely important law of love for happiness is broken, the lawbreaker must pay the penalty. A law without a penalty is only advice. The penalty must be as important as the law it is designed to protect. For such a terribly important law as God's law, that was made to direct and protect His intelligent, moral creatures, God set a penalty as high as possible; endless death. Separation forever from His Universe and all the rights and privileges of living and growing in it through eternity. "The soul that sins shall die... The wages of sin is death."

You, As A Sinner, Deserve To Be Punished

You know that deep inside. By rights, you should pay the penalty of your sin. You knew what was right, but did not do it. You have made a mess of your life. If you are really honest, you know you have no excuses to make. Nothing you could say to God could possibly justify the choices you have made to please yourself.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of law... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified... If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us."

BUT

In His great love and wisdom, God found a way to forgive you, and still be just . . .

IF

. . . you are willing to meet his conditions.

The Lord Jesus humbled Himself and became man. He lived a perfect life and never broke His Father's law of love. He offered His own perfect life as a sacrifice to provide a substitute for the penalty of your sin. His death on the cross shows at once how much God loves you and how much He hates your sin. You can choose one of two things: pay the penalty for your sin or resolve to turn your back on the past and give your life to God, letting the Lord Jesus be your substitute. God cannot forgive you unless you are willing to stop fighting Him and make Him your Boss. His Holy Spirit makes you willing to change, and He draws you now by His love. He wants to help you make a life-changing decision, now! Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me." "He that trusts his life wholly to the Son is experiencing eternal life; he that does not believe on the Son of God shall not see life; but the anger of God abides on him."

SALVATION

... is God's plan to restore man to a holy, happy relationship with Him. All problems of sin, doubt, failure, and lack of victory in God's power can be conquered by the following steps:

1.) RETHINK

Stop running away from the Voice of God and look at your life. We do not naturally want to obey God; only if we let the Holy Spirit show us our sin as GOD sees it will we realize just how bad we have been.

To do this, you **MUST** be **TOTALLY HONEST!**

Don't pretend.

Don't "play down" your sin.

Stop making excuses!

Admit it from your heart! "God, I am all wrong!"

If necessary, get paper and pencil and **WRITE DOWN** the things that have come between you and God, and stopped you from serving Him as you ought.

2.) REPENT

Turn your back on your old way of life. Be **WILLING** to lose any habit, any plan, any friend that you have been living your life for instead of God. This is not easy, but Jesus said if we want to follow Him, we must first count the cost. (Luke 14:25-33) Salvation is

like a marriage. Two people promise themselves to each other, pledge their love to each other before a watching world, and give up all their old dates. This is what God wants you to do to know His love.

Renounce...

Give up all rights to your own life. If you are going to be a part of God's world-changing family, you cannot be your own boss any longer. You must die to your own plans, dreams and ambitions, and be willing to do whatever God wants you to do. He knows exactly what will make you the most happy. It may hurt to surrender everything at first, but God knows best, and will never ask you to do anything that you will regret in the end. A true Christian has nothing of his own. Time, talents, money, possessions, friends, career, and future; all must be surrendered for his King's service wherever and whenever He wants them.

3.) REPLAN

Be prepared to make many changes in your life! The very moment you make this heart-choice for God, the old "you" will die, and a new person inside you will begin to live. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about getting something right with someone, you must be willing to do it, before God can help you. Wherever you need to confess wrong, or restore or repay something to someone, the Lord Jesus will give you the courage and the words to say. Becoming a Christian implies the willingness, as far as is humanly possible, to right all known wrong. (Prov. 28:13) If you have written out a list of things that have come between you and God, ask His forgiveness now for those against Him. Plan to make right all others with the people you know you have wronged, and feel guilty about. The circle of confession must fit the circle of committal of sin. Those against God, confess only to Him; those against one person, to that person alone; those against a group, to the group. (See "A Spiritual Checkup")

4.) RECEIVE

The Lord Jesus Christ by faith, (a loyalty of love to the Word of God), to rule in your heart as King. He must be your absolute "Boss" from now on! This act of faith is neither an "idea" or a mere "feeling" but an act, a choice of your will, made intelligently and carefully. Give Him your doubts, your weakness, and your loneliness. Your heart will never have peace, your doubts will never clear up, you will never die to the world until you trust, surrender, believe from your heart! Be totally honest with Him. Receive Christ into your life as your Lord and Master to live for Him from this moment on, forever. (Rom. 10:9-10)

5.) READY

THERE IS NO TIME LIKE NOW...

GOD HAS DONE EVERYTHING HE CAN FOR YOU...

THE NEXT MOVE MUST BE YOURS!!!

Are you willing to trust His love? Will you choose His life, or turn your back on His love and choose a future without Christ, without hope and without an end? Will you be very honest with Him right now? Talk to God before the touch of His Holy Spirit lifts off your life.

Tell Him in your own words something like this:

"God, I'm sorry I've been selfish and rebellious so long. I'm sick of my old life and I want to change. Please forgive my sin, and give me the power to live my life from this moment on for You. I give you my heart; take over everything I have and am, and be my Lord and King. Amen." Welcome To the Family!

If you have surrendered your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, you have entered an exciting new world. Things should be different, life will be fresh and new. If God has really taken the throne of your heart, the following things will grow in your life:

Desire For Scripture

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." A true Christian wants to find out what God asks him to do in His Word. The Bible is spiritual food, a weapon to defeat the devil, and a manual for daily living. (Job 23:12; Jer. 15:16; Deut. 6:5-7; Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 2:2) Make a solemn vow to God that you will spend a certain time or read a certain number of chapters in His Word. Read Ecc. 5:46; God will take you at your word with any promise you make to Him. Then decide sensibly how much time you can afford to give your King time to train you every day.

If you read 10 chapters a day, you can finish the Bible right through once every 18 weeks. Read 5 chapters of Psalms, one chapter of Proverbs each day and you will finish both books once a month. Five minutes a day of reading will take you through the Bible in less than a year. Decide on a time or a number of chapters; make your vow and STICK TO IT!

Difference Of Standards

"If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION; old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." A real Christian is different in habits, actions and purpose; in word, thought and standards. No person is a real Christian who is not trying to live like his Lord! Becoming a Christian is like learning to drive on the other side of the road. You must be careful for a while until you learn to think and act BY HABIT in this new way. It will take time and discipline to develop the right habit patterns. BEWARE of the crisis! In times of stress and sudden temptation, you may be tempted to return to the old way of life, especially if habits from the past have been deeply rooted in your mind. But "There is no temptation taken you but such as is COMMON to man; but GOD IS FAITHFUL Who will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will WITH THE TEMPTATION also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:15-16; Eph. 4:20-24; Phil. 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 1 Jn. 3:1-3)

Discipline Of Self

"But the fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Gentleness, Long-suffering, Goodness, Meekness, Faith, SELF-CONTROL..."

A child of God begins to discipline old areas of self-indulgence. Food, drink, in both quantity and quality, harmful stimulants, showy dressing and living, late nights and mornings, all come under the searchlight of the Holy Spirit for control and discipline. Your life will show constant changes for the better every day, as God shows you things needing revision. He is easy to please, but hard to satisfy! He wants your life as clean and efficient as the Lord Jesus Himself. "Every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself even as HE is pure." (1 John 3:3; Matt. 16:24; Luke 3:11; 1 Cor. 9:25-27; John 15:2; Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 John 4:17)

Despised By Society

Jesus said: "Because you are not of this world, the world will hate you...if they have persecuted Me, they shall persecute you." A real Christian will have trouble from those who pretend not to understand his new life, or from lukewarm church members who are backslidden in heart and whose halfhearted lives are exposed by his radiant witness.

A true Christian is a sane person in a madly selfish, morally insane world. The Christian is the only person who truly lives an intelligent, balanced life; his light shows up others' moral darkness, exposing their sin. Under the constant rebuke of such light, selfish men can only react in one of three ways; run from it; try to destroy it, or surrender to it and give their lives to God. Make no mistake; if you will live for God, you can expect trouble from the world around you. "All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution...Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven." (Matt. 5:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:12; Jn. 15:18-21; Rom. 8:18;12:20-21; I Pet. 2:20-21)

Seeks Other Christians

By THIS shall all men know that you are My disciples; if you have LOVE one toward another." God's love is to unselfishly choose the HIGHEST GOOD; of Him, as King first, then of all His creatures and His creation, according to their relative scale of values in the Universe. True love is not just a feeling, but a CHOICE; sometimes it will be hard, but it will always by right and always be the best thing to do. Love is an ACTION; love without action is no love at all. Find a true church, with true faith. That and only that which saves FROM (not IN!) sin and exalts (loves, talks about a lot) the Savior, the Lord Jesus, is true faith; ALL ELSE is false religion, and will slowly destroy your newfound joy and love in Christ Jesus. Just as live coals stay aflame in the fire, so spending time with others on fire for God will help keep you aflame for Christ. Go where you feel at home, where people love you, and work with them for the Lord Jesus. Be willing to break off with any friends who try to drag you back to the world. Your aim is to be like Jesus. The world is filled with phonies. Keep your eyes on Jesus as your Example. Never lower your standards to try to "fit in" with others, whether they claim to be Christians or not. You cannot please Christ and the world too. (Rom. 15:5-6; Acts 2:42; Eph. 3:17-19; Heb. 10:25; I Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 1:2,7;3:14;7:7-13)

Serves the Lord

"For me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain!" said the Apostle Paul, a mighty love-slave of Jesus Christ the Lord. A true Christian IS a witness. Everything he does counts for God - or against Him! The task of world evangelism is not just for the minister or preacher; the Lord Jesus gives it to EACH of His disciples as his or her LIFEWORK.

We are responsible for the souls of men and women, boys and girls, who pass into eternity around us every day. Whatever our job or living is, whether we preach, pray, write, design, build, trade or travel, labor with our hands, keep house or state - EVERY THING WE DO must tell OF and For the Lord Jesus and His Kingdom. You must consecrate all you have and are to this task, and ask God for His promised power to carry out the work. Jesus said - "You shall receive POWER after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall BE WITNESSES unto Me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea and in Samaria." At home, in the immediate neighborhood and among the outcasts of society and "unto the UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH." (To every nation and tongue that God opens the door for you to reach) EVERY Christian is a missionary; EVERY unsaved person is a mission-FIELD. Your friend may cross the world; you may cross the street; but all of us have a call to be missionaries for the Lord Jesus to help Him reach the world. (I Jn. 3:17;1 Pet. 2:2;I Jn. 3:16-24;2 Cor. 9:6-7;Acts 1:8;Phil. 1:21; Matt. 10:32;25:29;Jn. 14:12)

Sticks To the Task

God hasn't planned cycles of constant sin and repentance for ANY of His disciples! You are not infallible, but neither are you EXPECTED to go back into sin. God has promised to keep you safe and protected from all outer dangers; the world, the flesh and the Devil have no power over you as long as you stay close to the Lord Jesus; but KEEP GOING ON WITH HIM! (Luke 9:62) A true Christian is determined to stay true to God. The express teaching of the Bible is to live a life of HABITUAL victory over sin out of love to God. (Matt. 5:13-18; 7:12-27; Mk. 12:28-34; Jn. 15:8-14; Rom. 13:9-11; 1 Jn. 3:3-11)

No other life is truly Christian. All of us will be faced with temptation, weakness and possible failure. But by God's grace we can habitually overcome. Nowhere in the Bible is forgiveness automatic as long as sin is persisted in. A lot of lukewarm, halfhearted church members are going to get shocks on the Day of Judgment! STICK TO IT - God will help you! "This ONE THING I do - forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forwards for the things yet to come, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Jn. 1-4; Ps 37:23-24; Rom. 6:1-14; 2 Pet. 1:1-10; John 5:37,39)

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