

Saved From Hell and Ourselves

Song: "Be magnified, O Lord
You are highly exalted
And there is nothing You can't do
O Lord my eyes are on You
Be magnified O Lord
Be magnified"

Lord, we come before You today asking that You would be magnified, that we would see more of You, that we would see Your Glory and Your beauty, Lord. Draw us into Your presence today, Lord. Open Your Word by the Holy Spirit. I pray that there will be such a blessing, that we would be blessed and that You would be blessed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

I Timothy 1:15: "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."

I am a pattern person. I like patterns. I think we can use them to figure things out. And there are three trustworthy statements in the book of I Timothy. Generally, if ever something happens more than once in the Bible, it means pay attention. If it happens three times, it means really pay attention. So, there are three things that the Apostle Paul is really, really trying to get across.

The Younger Generation

Who knows who the book of Timothy was to? I guess you do. You know, it has really been kind of on my heart lately because I am part of the younger generation, and there is a generation that has come before us, and I have heard them sharing a whole lot about, how do we survive in this time? How do we keep our faith? How do we keep from being overwhelmed by the world around us? And that is quite like Paul's experience because he was not part of the very initial wave, but he was

part of the shortly after the initial wave when there was this huge apostle movement. The Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost, and people were being touched and saved, and Jesus was the Messiah. It was exciting, and then as time went on there were problems, there were controversies. Things fell apart, and the world fell into disorder. Paul had to learn how to endure. But in the middle of all that there was the second generation, a younger generation who, Jesus being the Messiah, was not new groundbreaking information; it was a given. "Of course, Paul, of course I believe that, here I am."

Conflicts Within the Second Generation

This is a letter written to the second generation of something very important that he was trying to get across. And my burden is for those of us who struggle not so much with the world around us; but we struggle with what is going on inside us. There was conflict, and that conflict was inside Timothy, and Paul saw this and wanted to be able to reach out to his student, pupil, friend, apprentice, son, whatever their relationship was. So, these are things that he wanted him to hear.

I have gotten a little bit of comfort from this, and I wanted to pass it on to you, and if I don't it will be sad for me, I guess.

I Timothy 1:15: "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."

I Am Saved

I really admire this man's humility because if you have someone you are training the instinct is, "I am fine, other people are not so good, but Paul points to himself and says, "Timothy, my pupil, my son, I am the chief of sinners." There are two important things that I want to point out. One, do you see how he says, "I am foremost of all, not I was foremost of all." It is a very important distinction. "I am" means something that I currently

am. I am a man; I am six feet and some change. I am wearing shoes. Those are statements that are true concurrently.

“I was” is something that no longer applies to me. I was a child. I owned a Toyota. Those are things that once were true but no longer are true and have no bearing on me. So, if you loop back that to the beginning, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. So, I wanted to kind of dissect what Paul is trying to say here because many of us know that we are saved, most of us, gloriously saved at some point in our life. I was saved on March 30, 2000, according to my mother. My mom underlines it on the calendar, and she reminds me every year. I had a four-year stench, an unredeemed sinner. There were pictures but I thought it would be distracting. But at the same time, while I am saved, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners among whom I am, not I was. So, I wanted to delve into this to try to see what it is.

Now please understand, I want to have a very special clarification of terms. When I say “saved,” I do not mean like in the right now sense. I do not mean saved from hell. I do not mean saved from eternal punishment or whatever. If you are saved from the beginning, that is in the package just for clarification. But there is a follow up thing that is also glorious that we are going to delve into.

Seeing Sinner as the Statue in the Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

So, I want to dissect what a sinner is. I was giving this some thought, and I did not really know how to go about explaining what a sinner is because it is a general term, and a lot of us do not really understand that word “sinner” because it is kind of a high concept. So, I accidentally found a cool thing describing what it was.

Daniel 2:31-33: ““You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of

silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.”

I think that is a wonderful description of a sinner personally. So, who here is familiar with the Chronicles of Narnia? The villain, the white witch, has a way in which she turns people to stone. She walks up to them and turns them into stone. It is very scary and very sad. Somehow that is what we are when we arrive on this planet. We show up, and we are statues.

Self-life

Now let me explain why I think that is the case because there is a head of fine gold. Gold represents God’s holiness. But here is the thing. In our statue stage we have a holiness that is independent holiness. It is not God’s holiness. The statue has arms of silver. Silver represents wisdom in the Proverbs. In our statue stage it is a wisdom that does not come from God. The belly is bronze. Now I had to kind of delve into this one a little bit. Bronze represents redemption like the bronze serpent on the staff representing Jesus. In our statue stage it is a different kind of redemption. It is how we redeem ourselves. It is how we excuse ourselves. It is our own sense of right or wrong. It is our conscience. But it comes from us. There are legs of iron and clay. The Bible says that the Lord will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Iron represents will. The feet are partly iron and partly clay. That is your will mixed in with your body because we are made of the dust of the earth, it represents our flesh. And that is what you are on our natural birth.

We Worship Ourselves

Now bear in mind a lot of people have a hard time comprehending that they are a sinner because, “I am a good person. I am smart; I have scruples, I have principles, I can do things, I can commit myself to things. What is the problem?”

Pride, yes, but let’s dissect it a little bit. When the devil fell, the reason he fell was because he did not want to be a worshipper anymore. He

wanted to be worshipped. In extend he wanted to worship himself. He became his own idol.

Brothers and sisters, one of the reasons why sinners are unacceptable to God is we have done that same thing on arrival. We have all these things that are all our own, and the reason why there is punishment for us is because God will not tolerate idols. God is a jealous God. When we arrived, we were idols, accidentally, on arrival. Can you imagine? We serve ourselves; we serve our own needs, we prioritize ourselves, we worship ourselves, we operate by our own pride. What a mess! What a mess! And you know the Word is very clear about what He wants to do with idols, right? You must melt them down. You must burn them, you must shatter them, you must melt them. Brothers and sisters, that is what hell is. That is our state without Jesus. It is not an issue of “oh, am I good or bad, whatever?” It is what you are out of the box.

The Lord Jesus Came from Heavens to Save Sinners

So, we have done a wonderful job talking about the grace of our Lord, this morning, and I am not going to touch on that because other people have done it far better. But praise the Lord, our Lord Jesus saw that situation, and He loved us. A lot of us think we are a kind of easy self-love. “Look, I have these principles. I have these scruples, I am charming.” The Lord saw us in that state and said, “I love him. I love him.” And the Father, who is a jealous God, had the understanding that for them to go to the state where they can be anywhere close to the Father, someone has got to be in the middle, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Jesus Christ came in. He has a wonderful state: “I am from above; you are from below.” He is not from here. He is not like us. He came into this world, and it did not touch Him, and He saved us. He died on the cross.

The Lord Jesus is the Perfect Sacrificial Lamb

I was reading through Leviticus, and it was talking about how the lamb must be spotless to be an offering for sin. He gets brought in and examined, and he must be spotless. I was reading in Luke about the crucifixion because Luke was a doctor, and most people think, “Jesus got arrested, sent to some priests, sent to Pilate and was crucified.” What happened was that Jesus got arrested, got sent to the priests, got sent to Pilate, got sent to Herod, got sent back to Pilate. None of them found a good reason for Him to be crucified just because the people outside were going to riot.

But brothers and sisters, that was the Lord being the perfect sacrificial Lamb for us—examined, examined, spotless. And believe it or not, our Lord hung on the cross for six hours. Have you ever had to do anything unpleasant for six hours? Have you ever had to drive for six hours, sitting next to someone for six hours? The way that the Lord Jesus saved us was by becoming our substitute, and He stood there, arms raised, “examine Me, examine Me, examine Me, examine Me, examine Me” for six hours being examined. Are you good enough to be the exchange for this? Are you enough? Is this good enough?

We Are Saved from the Separation with God

And at the very end God said, “Yes.” That is what we come into, brothers and sisters. If you believe that, that is what salvation is. And you can make good on it every single day. It mentions that we are saved from separation from God. That is the first saved that I wanted to touch. We are saved from that separation, and every day we can come into it. It mentions in I John if any man sins the blood of Jesus covers. We have been saved from separation. We can plead the blood. We can plead the blood. We can plead the blood. We have the Lord up there interceding. I have this picture in my head; it is probably not accurate, but I always kind of imagine and this is so cheesy, but God the Father is there, and Jesus is at His right hand. And God looks down and sees you making a mistake,

and He looks over and Jesus puts His hand on His shoulder. The Lord looks and sees the whole. Can you imagine!

Holy Spirit Indwells in Us to Give Us a Heart of Flesh

So, I want to go into the second half of being saved that is a little more complicated than that because after you got saved, do you still make mistakes? So, the Lord rescued you. You are still a statue, but you are not a statue that is going to be burned anymore. It is like a garden gnome. You are just kind of a garden gnome lying on the ground, but we have an advantage.

In the Chronicles of Narnia, do you all remember how the statues go from being statues to being people again? He breathes on them. Believe it or not, that is in the Bible in John 20:22: "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." You had been saved, but now the Lord breathes on you. Suddenly there is somewhere deep within your heart where the Holy Spirit comes in and He says, "I will take the heart of stone, and I will put in a heart of flesh."

Process of Being Saved from Our Nature (Sinner)

The Lord comes in and He starts to do a work, and it starts to be flesh where there was metal. I know he said, "Silver here," but it is also where your heart is. But I do not know how that works. So, it starts to breathe. I am not an authority to really talk about how it goes from there. I am going to give some rough illustrations. I mentioned before about us being saved, but the second part is us being saved from being a sinner. It is a process. It is something the Lord takes us through.

The Experience of Jeremiah

I was reading Jeremiah 20:7-13. So, this is what happens when they get saved and have been walking with Him for a while. Jeremiah was kind of like Timothy where the Lord called him, and he had a special calling. And he was like, "Great, I am a little bit young but great." Then problems and stuff just accidentally or coincidence come into our lives, but this is

kind of the Christian thing which we go through. I am going to jump around, but this is what happens.

“O LORD, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me. For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the LORD has resulted In reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, "I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name," then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in; I cannot endure it. For I have heard the whispering of many, "Terror on every side! Denounce him; yes, let us denounce him!" All my trusted friends, watching for my fall, say: "Perhaps he will be deceived, so that we may prevail against him And take our revenge on him." But the LORD is with me like a dread champion; therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, with an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten. Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart. Let me see Your vengeance on them; for to You I have set forth my cause. Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD! For He has delivered the soul of the needy one From the hand of evildoers.”

That is our road because the thing we must be saved from is our nature, and it is a hard road. I cannot even begin to explain what that is going to look like for you. I am not fit to do that because I do not understand it. I am still a statue in so many ways, but the Lord is doing something, brothers, and sisters. The Lord is doing something day by day.

Experience of the Ward's Family

I am a big fan of Jesus movement, music, revolution music. Any 2nd Chapter of Acts fans here? Nice, you all should talk afterward; it is a good band.

I am not any authority to dig into this so just take this with a grain of salt. So, there was this family, mom, dad, bunch of kids, and they grew up in the Midwest, I think. The mother developed some health problems. Some of the kids grew up. The mother found out she had a brain tumor and passed away. The father, about two years later, also had cancer and passed away.

The kids were left orphans. Some were older and had families of their own. But the two youngest did not have anywhere to go. And one of the older sisters was married and became their legal guardian. So there were two sisters and a brother. The sister played the piano for therapy, and they would sit around the piano and play music together. It was very cheerful music, and they really loved the Lord. They sang about Jesus, praising Jesus, loving Jesus, and this was when they were kids. They did the first album when they were teens, I think the boy was sixteen or seventeen in the beginning. So fast forward, I think their first album came out in 1974. Matthew was the boy, and he knew the Lord, composed songs praising the Lord.

Then at twenty odd years he also developed cancer. It was a rough time. This is one of those things where stuff like this happens, and we don't know what to make of it. Listen to the transition because they went from boy who was in his teens singing about Jesus to boy who has cancer singing about Jesus, and this was a transition. Forgive me, these are kind of corny from the nineties, but I just wanted to share this. He wrote this afterwards. He said that this was sort of a song of what was going through his head when he had cancer.

God Almighty

Overwhelmed with sorrow
Broken by the pain
I could hear the doubt
Falling like the rain
This time it is over

This time you won't win
While the voice of doubt was calling
I barely heard the truth within

I am watching
Watching over you
I am for you
And I will lead you on

Loneliness would cry out
Keeping my heart bound
I would ache inside
To hear Heaven's sound
Just the smallest whisper
Just a word or two
Could let me know there's nothing
My God can't do

God Almighty
God Almighty
God Almighty
Raised me from the dead

Wounded but not shattered
I was battered but not lost
Your holy hands were there to guide
Breaking the chains deep inside
Through it all I've learned to see
Just what You've done for me
You've given me faith to live again

God Almighty
God Almighty

God Almighty
Raised me from the dead
Oh He raised me from
Raised me from the dead

Christ Jesus Came into the World to Save Sinners

I cannot with authority share on things that happen to people. I don't know what that process looks like for you. I have no authority over it, I can't comprehend this. I barely understand what is happening inside of me, but Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief, and it is a trustworthy statement.

Dear Lord, we praise You that You finish what You start. We praise You that there is nothing You can't do. We praise You that You choose us. We praise You that You keep working in us. We praise You that it is not over, and we praise You that You will lead us on, Lord. Amen.