

A GOSPEL PERSPECTIVE

Tuesday, January 27
Reading: Proverbs 16:4-8

Proverbs 16:6 *Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.*

These verses present the message of the gospel in a nutshell. They describe the need for salvation, the means of salvation, and the results of salvation.

NEED FOR SALVATION (16:4-5) – People are sinful. That “the Lord detests the proud of heart” goes to the heart of our sinfulness. It was pride that led Satan to rebel against God and he loves to use a selfish prideful attitude to take others down with him! It could be said that all sin has its basis in pride – the belief that we are good the way we are and have no need of God’s help or salvation. But this will only end in disaster and punishment. That “the Lord works out everything to its proper end” reminds us that God is still in control. “This does not mean that God is the author of sin, but it does mean that He is sovereign over it, and that His purposes prevail through it...What a strangely comforting truth: that in the evil we see around us, we can know that God’s purposes prevail.”¹ The greatest example of this is Calvary. The sinful plots of men crucified the Lord but in God’s sovereign plan Jesus’ death would bring salvation.

MEANS OF SALVATION (16:6) – The “love and faithfulness” spoken of here belongs to God. In our sinful state, there is no way we could atone for our sins. These two words are often put together to describe the mercy of God.

Exodus 34:6 “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Psalms 36:5 Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

(See also Psalm 26:3; 40:11; 86:15; 89:2; et. al.)

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were meant to point forward to God’s ultimate act of love and faithfulness at the cross. The words of the psalmist were then completely fulfilled: “Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other” (Psalm 85:9-10).

RESULTS OF SALVATION (16:6-8) – The salvation bought for us on the cross allows us to have a relationship with God. We turn away from evil and find that righteousness is better than anything the world has to offer. We have our sins forgiven and our lives transformed. The greatest benefit is that God now “takes pleasure” in us. We no longer stand condemned (Romans 8:1) but have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). We can now live a life of peace with God and others. Our faith should have an impact on those around us. The New Testament gives us this command: “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). As someone once said, “Live to please God. If you do, you will please the godly, and no one else really matters!”²

¹ Kathleen Nielson. Proverbs for You, p. 132

² A. J. Higgins. What the Bible Teaches: Proverbs (Ritchie Old Testament Commentaries), p 181