

Salvation

Scripture is clear that we are not saved by what we do; rather, salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ as a free gift that we receive by faith (Ephesians 2:8). However, when we receive Christ, it is evidenced by change in our thinking and behavior in response to confessing our sin, acknowledging our need for a Savior and accepting Jesus Christ as God's provision for our lost condition (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is God's desire that no one should spend eternity apart from Him but rather that all should obtain salvation (1 Timothy 2:4). Scripture is also clear that nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:39).

Scripture declares that every person needs to surrender their life to God through Jesus Christ. Nicodemus was a man who faithfully attended church, prayed, memorized scriptures, tithed, fasted, believed in God and acknowledged Jesus was sent from God. Jesus told him, "You must be born again!" (John 3:7) In other words, being a good and religious person does not meet the requirements for having a relationship with a holy and righteous God, which is what salvation is all about.

Not every encounter with God is a salvation encounter. When someone responds to God's prompting, a seed is planted, but later in their life, an encounter with God may result in a response where some might say they "rededicated" their life. That is when a change in their thinking and behavior occurs. Jesus spoke of repentance as involving a change in behavior (Matthew 4:17, John 8:11), and He associated that change with salvation.

It is our conviction that when a person has been truly born again to new life in Christ, that person's relationship with God is eternally secure and His love for us is without question. As a loving Father, He disciplines disobedience and brings correction through a variety of means, but He never leaves us, rejects us or withdraws His promise of eternity with Him.

Issues of Concern and Practice:

1. Once a person has received Christ, evidenced by fruit of changed behavior in their life, they maintain intimacy of relationship with God through obedience, pursuit and service to God. When intimacy is lost through sin or neglect, it does not require a person to be "saved" again, although it does involve repentance for restored intimacy with God.
2. Because salvation is afforded through Christ's crucifixion, water baptism is not necessary for a person to be saved. However, water baptism is an association with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It symbolizes the death of the old

man and the resurrection of the new man in Christ. Baptism is a command for believers modeled by Jesus through His own baptism and is a necessary step of obedience for continued growth in Christ. It is not necessary for church membership, but we encourage all believers to be water baptized after salvation.

3. Every person is born with a sin nature and cannot produce the righteousness required by God no matter how diligent their efforts. This reality forms the basis of our need for Christ. We do not believe in the inherent goodness of man but instead acknowledge with Scripture our needful dependence on God. It is this belief that compels us to share the “good news” of the gospel of Christ with everyone. The essence of the good news is revealed in the truth that it is not God’s desire that any should perish but that all should come to eternal life through Jesus Christ.
4. We acknowledge that every person has been created by God with a free will. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the testimony of those redeemed by Him and enlightenment of scriptural truth, a person is presented with the opportunity to accept the gifts that God has provided through Christ. This begins with salvation and extends through every provision afforded by Christ’s atoning work and every revelation of His great love for mankind. All His work and gifts are appropriated by faith and the exercise of our free will in response to Him.
5. We believe that children can be saved. A response to God through Jesus Christ requires an awareness of His promises and our sinful condition. Because maturity and thinking processes develop individually, we do not limit the salvation experience to a specific age, but rather believe it is a response based on understanding the truth of Scripture and God’s claim on our lives regardless of the age of the individual.

Scriptural References:

The following scriptures refer specifically to the experience of salvation and are the basis from which we draw our position stated herein.

- Romans 3:3
- Romans 10:10
- John 3:16-17
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Titus 3:5
- 2 Corinthians 13:5
- Matthew 7:13-23
- Hebrews 6:1-8
- John 15:8

How to Receive Jesus Christ:

You receive Jesus Christ by believing in your heart that He is the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind and by confessing with your mouth your love and commitment to Him. These two responses constitute the act of receiving Jesus through faith (Romans 10:10). After your confession of faith, there will be a peace that settles over your mind and heart. It may involve an emotional response, but that is not necessary for salvation. Salvation is not an emotional event; it is a response of acceptance to the truthful promises of God. Often the awareness of what God has provided becomes emotional to the individual, but if it does not, the process is not negated. Jesus stated that it was to our advantage that He went away because then He could send the Holy Spirit to us (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit's presence and work leads us to a deeper intimacy with God and a fulfillment of His will in our life.

Summary:

All people are born with a sinful nature and need the redemption available through Jesus Christ. By responding to God from their heart with words similar to those below, one can be saved.

“Father God, I come to You in Jesus name. Jesus who loves me and gave himself for me. Lord I love You and I give myself to You. Come into my heart, come into my life and make me brand new. Fill me with Your peace, Your joy and with the assurance that You will never leave nor forsake me. Amen.”

Romans 10:10 tells us that by believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we are saved. We encourage every believer to give open testimony of their love for God and their faith in Jesus Christ, His Son.