

4 TRUTHS

*every Christian
should know*

about

SALVATION

Many believers are frustrated and troubled about their walk, sometimes doubting their salvation because of so much failure in their lives. The following four truths about salvation should be helpful to anyone with such thoughts.

Truth 1: FORGIVENESS

When we come to the Lord Jesus as sinners and accept Him as our Savior, God forgives our sins and justifies us because of the shed blood of Christ (Rom. 3:23-26).

When Jesus was on the cross, our sins were laid on Him and He took the punishment for them. There is no more judgment for sin for all who accept Christ as their Savior. Every sin that comes into our lives has already been judged and punished when Christ died for us on the cross (Is. 53:5-6; Heb. 9:28; 10:12-14).

Perhaps someone might say, "If that is true it does not make much difference whether we continue to sin or not." But it does make a tremendous difference, because there are three other truths to consider about salvation.

Truth 2: A NEW NATURE

When we accept Christ as our Savior, God not only forgives us and justifies us, but He also gives us a new (divine) nature. We are born again – we become God's children (1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18; 2 Pet. 1:4). This new nature loves God and hates sin; it makes us desire to live without sinning and makes us feel miserable when we do sin. No born again Christian can be truly happy in sin.

But someone asks, "Why do I do sinful things if I have a new nature? I really do not want to do them, but even with all my good intentions I eventually give in and do them again."

We not only have a new nature that hates sin, but we also still have the old (sinful) nature that loves sin. There is a conflict going on within us. The old nature *wants* to sin but the new nature *wants* to please God.

Besides this, we have consciences which tell us that what the new nature wants is right, and what the old nature wants is always wrong. But we find all too often

that the old nature, with its desires and lusts for sinful things, is the strongest in time of temptation. It carries us away captive and we do those things which our new nature hates and our consciences denounce.

After it is all over we regret it and resolve that we will never do it again. However, it just seems as if we don't have any strength to resist temptation. What is to be done? Here is where the third truth of salvation comes in.

Truth 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we accepted Christ as our Savior and were born again, God gave us His Holy Spirit to live in our hearts (Eph. 1:13; Gal. 4:6). This Holy Spirit pours out the love of God in our hearts and causes us to feel the peace of Christ in our souls. As a result, we are happy! (Rom. 5:1-15).

But when we give way to sin, the Holy Spirit is grieved. He cannot give us joy, because that would encourage us in those sinful things which He hates. He is one with God the Father and Son in His

hatred of sin and love of righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:30).

The Holy Spirit is given to us not only to pour out the love of God in our hearts. He also gives us power to say "No!" to the desires of the old nature, and to yield ourselves to the will of God, doing those things that please Him. "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16 NKJV).

It is just like Peter walking on the water. As long as he was counting on the Lord to hold him up, all went well; but the very moment he noticed that the wind and the waves were rough, he became afraid and began to sink. In our Christian experience we must count on the Lord to hold us up each step of the way by the power of His indwelling Spirit (Mt. 14:24-31; Jn. 15:4-5).

Truth 4: FELLOWSHIP

Salvation brings us into fellowship with God. There is a happy feeling between God as our Father and us as His children. We can enjoy hearing what He has to say

to us by His Spirit through His Word. We feel free to talk with Him about all our troubles, just as a child is free with his earthly father whom he knows loves him. He makes us happy by his smile.

However, when a child disobeys, he knows his father will be displeased. Instead of a smile he has to experience discipline. The *relationship* between father and child has not changed, but the *fellowship* and the happy feeling between them has been broken.

So it is with our heavenly Father. When we sin we are still His children. It is also true that Christ already took the judgment for that sin; it has been put away by His sacrifice on the cross. But fellowship with our Father and with our Savior is broken and the Holy Spirit is grieved. The Father has to rebuke us for our disobedience and perhaps even chasten us, especially if we continue in it.

If we come to Him with confession, humbled because of our sin and disobedience, then we can experience His forgiveness as a father forgives his child. Fellowship is restored and we feel free and

happy in His presence again (1 Jn. 1:9).

So then, when a child of God sins he is not lost, because God has accepted him on the basis of Christ's sacrifice for our sins. Neither is his *relationship* with God broken. He is still God's child and God is still his Father. But his *fellowship* with the Father is broken, the Holy Spirit is grieved and he is subject to the Father's chastening. When he is humbled about his sin and confesses it to his Father then fellowship is restored.

There is one thing we lose by sin that can never be restored. Christ said that a cup of cold water given in His name would never be forgotten (Mk. 9:41). He is going to give a reward for everything we do to please Him. Therefore, if instead of giving way to sin we had been obedient and done something that pleased Him, we would have received a reward in heaven.

But now that reward is lost because we have lost the opportunity to gain it. That is an eternal loss, since every reward Christ gives in heaven is an eternal reward.

This should make us careful not to lose the opportunities we have each day for faithfulness to the Lord. If we let them slip by, both the opportunities and the rewards are lost forever.

We will have all eternity to rejoice in the rewards for our victories, but we have only the present moment to win them. There are no victories to be won in heaven – they must all be won now or never.

– *E. C. Hadley*

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