

Subject: God's Best Gifts: Salvation

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

It's the season for giving and receiving gifts. God is the greatest Giver and we are thinking about His best gifts. In the last message we considered God's gift of the Bible. In our text we looked at this verse:

2 Timothy 3:15 *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

God gave the Scriptures to make us wise unto salvation. In this message we're going to look into God's wonderful gift of salvation. From beginning to end, salvation is a gift.

1. GOD PROVIDES THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION

We see this in Ephesians 2:4-7. Paul refers to the riches of God's mercy, love, and grace.

A. Forgiveness and cleansing

Psalms 130:3-4³ *If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*⁴
But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

B. Justification

We are no longer guilty and condemned because of our sins.

Romans 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

C. Redemption

We are set free from the bondage of sin and the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

Ephesians 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

D. Adoption

We are accepted as members of God's family.

Galatians 4:4-5⁴ *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*⁵ *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

E. Reconciliation

We are brought into harmony and peace with God.

Romans 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

F. Sanctification

We become more like Christ in thought, word, and deed.

1 Corinthians 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

G. Glorification

We are made perfect in body and soul to live forever in heaven.

Romans 8:16-17 ¹⁶ *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:* ¹⁷ *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Philippians 3:20-21 ²⁰ *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:* ²¹ *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

Tenses of Salvation:

- In the past we have been justified (saved from the penalty of sin)
- In the present we are being sanctified (saved from the power of sin)
- In the future we will be glorified (saved from the presence & possibility of sin)

First, God forms us. Then, sin deforms us. And finally, Jesus transforms us.

2. GOD PERSONALIZES THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION

God works in our hearts to prepare us and make us ready to receive the gift of salvation. We see this in Ephesians 2:1-3. God brings us from spiritual death to life. He rescues us from the wrong road (walking according to the course of this world), delivers us from the power of Satan, and changes our desires and our thinking.

A. God reveals our sinful condition (conviction)

The Holy Spirit convinces us of sin, righteous, and judgment.

John 16:7-11 ⁷ *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* ⁸ *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* ⁹ *Of sin, because they believe not on me;* ¹⁰ *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;* ¹¹ *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

The Holy Spirit uses God's law as the standard to reveal our sin.

Romans 3:19-20 ¹⁹ *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become*

guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

B. God gives us spiritual life (regeneration)

In Christ we have been born again and we are partakers of the divine nature.

John 3:5-7 ⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

C. God gives us a heart to repent and believe

The blessings of salvation are applied when we repent of sin and believe in Christ. Even repentance and faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8).

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 ²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, ²⁵ In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

Philippians 2:12-13 ¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- 1) By grace – salvation is possible
- 2) Through faith – salvation is personal
- 3) Unto good works – salvation is practical

Our salvation is a gift of God's grace from start to finish. God made a plan to save us. He sent His Son to provide salvation. He works in our hearts to apply the blessings of salvation to us personally.

In salvation God does something *for* us so He can do something *to* us so He can do something *through* us. Jesus died for us on Calvary and then God applies the blessings of salvation to us at a point in time when we turn from our sin and trust Christ as Savior. How do we know our salvation is real? It shows up in the way we live and serve.