

# What is Salvation?

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**Bible Text:** 1 Timothy 2:4-6

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## Grace Baptist Church

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Ok. Today we want to actually go back to 1 Timothy chapter two. I would that you would open your Bibles there with me this morning. I want to deal with a question this morning. It is a question that a lot of people take out of context and very few people actually know anything about it today. They think they do, but their idea of the answer to this question isn't based on biblical truth. It is based on supposition and tradition. The question is simply this: **WHAT IS SALVATION?**

Well, that's a question there. **WHAT IS SALVATION?**

I'll tell you what, our eternal destiny hangs in the balance on this thing that men refer to and call salvation. And that is what Paul brings us to here in **1 Timothy 2**. We want to deal with three verses this morning if we can. Let's just read them together, because, boy, these are verses that everybody seizes on that believes in free will salvation, those folks that believe God is trying his dead level best and wants to save everybody. They will appeal to a verse like this one, much like they do to the one over in **2 Peter** where he talks about he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."<sup>1</sup> They try to portray God as one who really, really, really wants to save everybody, but He can't and won't violate your free will. He leaves it up to you to make the decision.

So they seize on this verse, verse four.

*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ho gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*<sup>2</sup>

Again, they lift those three verses out and they key on this, "*Who will have all men to be saved.*"<sup>3</sup> They key on this in verse 6 - "*Who gave himself a ransom for all.*"<sup>4</sup> But now

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 3:9.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4-6.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 2:6.

I will give you up front one clue to understanding verses 4 through verse 6, Notice verse 1 - *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for [who?] ALL MEN.”*<sup>5</sup> Now does that mean that you are supposed to pray for every single solitary person on the planet? Does it? What is he talking about? We will see that as we get through this.

What is salvation? What is it? The word “saved” and “salvation” are two words that passes across the lips and the tongues of almost everybody in this generation. Everybody talks about salvation much like the words “gospel” and “Christ.” The question we should always ask when people talk about salvation, or when they talk about whether or not they are saved or when they talk about what they call the gospel. When they make statements like: “We preach the gospel at our church” or “our preacher preaches about the Lord Jesus Christ”, the question you need to always ask them this is: What do you mean? What do you mean when you talk about salvation? What do you mean when you say, “Well, I am saved”? Tell me what that means.

I believe, and I speak from my heart this morning, I believe just about everybody in our church body knows what it is to be saved. I believe you could define it based on Biblical truth because we have taught you, **not because I am the one doing the teaching**, but because you heard God’s Word and you bowed to God’s Word. You could tell somebody in the best possible words you could put it in what salvation is. You could tell people what the hope of your salvation is.

Another question we might ask them is this. How do those who profess salvation, what do they understand it to be? What do they mean by it? Some, doubtless, when they look at this thing of salvation, they see it as a promise, a reward for having fulfilled certain conditions. That is what most people think. Most people you know, friend, family and foe, people who are close to us, when they think of salvation they think that it is based on something that they do or have done. Whether it is church attendance or morality or reformation, turning over a new leaf, their salvation is based on something. It is kind of like they look at it like this: God said He will do this if you will do that. And that is the way they look at this thing of salvation. They have been told that if they will just say a prayer, and if they will ask Jesus into their heart or if they live right or they do right that everything will be all right. It is kind of like the old saying, “Just keep the faith, brother.” That is the way they “just keep the faith.” They keep on holding on. You know, that is what our generation believes in. I mean I have heard that until I am sick of it. It is not the one who starts the race, it is the one who finishes the race as if the race is conditioned on the sinner. And that is what they believe.

Listen. Faith has been made a synonym for salvation in my generation. When, in truth, do you know what faith is? Faith is the evidence, it is the fruit of salvation. What is salvation? *“This is a record that God hath given us eternal life”* and this life is one place. It is not in a profession. A lot of folks have professed and many more will. This life is

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Timothy 2:1.

where? **IT IS IN THE SON.** “*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,*”<sup>6</sup> “*but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”<sup>7</sup>

I tell you this morning, that is where salvation is. Christ is salvation. Everything that He did by way of obedience. All his life, all his works, all his effort, all his energy, all that he gave, **THAT IS SALVATION.** It is not what you do in any way.

False religion teaches men that salvation is something that can't be known for sure in his life. And so they trudge life's pathway doing the best that they can, hoping that in the end God will show them mercy for at least having given it their best shot. Their claim will be “We tried.” We see them at the judgment in Matt.7 - “*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*”<sup>8</sup> Notice Christ's response - “*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”<sup>9</sup> Boy, that is tragic. Spend all of your life thinking you are saved based on something you have done and to find out too late you missed it because you rested on the wrong hope, **not in Christ.**

Still others make it a cooperation between God and what the sinner must do. They also make certain conditions be met in order to be really sure that God has done it. Now that is the Christ plus doctrine and that is what is so prevalent in our generation today. They say, “Here is what you have got to know and here is what you have got to believe and yet here is how you prove it.” They go over to verses like James that faith without works is dead. James and Paul were talking about different things. James was talking about the fruit and effect of salvation. Paul was talking about the fact that we are justified by faith without works. Our justification rests in one place. It rests in the Lord Jesus Christ. I want today, if I can, I want us to see three answers from the inspired Word of God that he gives us concerning this question: **WHAT IS SALVATION?**

And the first one is in our text in verse four. Notice it. “*Who will have all men to be saved.*”<sup>10</sup> And this is so important. Not only will He have them to be saved, but underline this - “*...and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*”<sup>11</sup> Do you see that? Salvation is based on what? Truth. Truth. You know, the gospel, salvation itself which God wills that all men should enjoy, it is not just a mere possibility of salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come here and live this life among sinners like you and me, walk among us, talk to us, live his life in perfect obedience to God's law and justice and suffer and bleed and die ultimately not to see anybody saved. He didn't just put man in a mere savable position. And listen. When we think about it and this is one thing that our religious friends don't want to hear. They don't like this. They don't like it at all. **SALVATION IS NOT AN OFFER.** Do you hear me? Now, I know that they offer salvation. Salvation is not an offer. **IT IS A COMMAND.** When He says, “*Believe on*

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<sup>6</sup> 1 John 5:12.

<sup>7</sup> John 3:36.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 7:22.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 7:23.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

*the Lord Jesus Christ,”* that is not a request. That is as much a command as *“thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness.”* He doesn’t request that men come to repentance. He commands all men to come to repentance.

And listen. Salvation is not a proposal of sufficient means of salvation to everybody, all men and women without exception in his Word. That is not like Christ died for everybody and he obtained salvation for everybody, but ultimately it rests on what the sinner will do with Jesus. That is not what salvation is. Salvation is: if you don’t get anything else this morning, you get this - Salvation is a real, certain actual salvation which He has determined that His elect will have, *“who **WILL** have all men to be saved.”* That is not a wish. That is how some men like to interpret that. They say, “Well, that verse really means who desires all men to be saved.” You can’t find that in the original language. We are talking about his will. And his will is not thwarted. *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”(Dan.4:35)* That is his will. That is this God we serve. The God of this Bible, the God that you and I have bowed to as the God of our salvation, the Lord our righteousness, He is not a God who is trying to do anything. He doesn’t want to and can’t. Everything here, everything we experience in this life, everything that God has enabled us to enjoy, even though we get the benefits and blessings of it, listen: It is not for us. Everything is to glorify and honor him. That is why this thing was created. Now I know the world doesn’t look at it like that. Because, listen. They put too much stock in what man is. We are as the grass of the field. Our glory is fading. And I will guarantee you. Unlike the God of creation who cannot die, we are going to die. Life is going to leave our body one day. So this is not about us. We get the privilege of it. We will get to spend eternity with him based on the blood and righteousness of our substitute and our representative the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not about us. He created in order to glorify and honor himself as both a just God and a Savior. That is why we are here.

People say, “Well, that makes it kind of like we are an experiment.” Well, if we are his experiment, that is fine. Because I will tell you what: If He hadn’t gave you life you wouldn’t be here anyhow. That is just rational thinking!

See, salvation is a sure thing. **First of all** it is a sure thing because He appointed it. *“Who will have all men to be saved.”*<sup>12</sup> **Secondly**, it is secure and sure from the satisfaction of Christ as the Savior of those the Father appointed to salvation. He is the mediator. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. It is sure and certain from the covenant of grace in which everything is proposed and necessary for our salvation. Everything that God requires, all that he required, we sang it a few minutes ago. Where is it at? It is in Christ, based on his righteousness.

Thirdly, It is sure from the mission of Christ to effect it. What did he come here for? He didn’t come here to set an example. He didn’t come here to show you how to live in order to make it to glory. He came here to actually bring his children to glory. He came to

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

seek and (thank God) to save that which was lost. And he didn't try. He did it perfectly and completely.

Therefore the will of God that all men should be saved, it is not a conditional will. It doesn't depend on the will of man or on anything to be performed by man. Because you know what? If it depended on us, on our will or on our way, do you know how many would be saved? If it depended on you in any way to any degree at any time, I am looking a group of lost folks And I am looking at the world full of people who would never make it to heaven because none will. You will not come to me that you might have life. They go to a church. They will go to a profession. They will go to reformation. They will not come to Him.

If you came to him, it is because he made you willing. He broke your old heart and brought you to his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. I tell you the will of God is a sovereign will and thank God it cannot be frustrated. That is what gives me comfort and hope every time I stand up to preach. It would be real easy to get discouraged when you spend 20 years preaching the gospel and so few people seem to be interested in it. But I know this: His sheep will hear and they will believe. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."*<sup>13</sup> This is my Lord's Word. This is not what some seminary taught me. This is not what some old preacher taught me. This is not what even those old reformers taught me. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*<sup>14</sup> Now that is pretty sure and certain. *"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*<sup>15</sup> I have been with you 20 years and I can honestly say in 20 years I have not added anybody. And if we are together 20 more years, do you know how many I am going to add? Not a one, because if I add you or some other preacher adds you, I can tell you. You are going to be subtracted. But if He adds you, if He puts you in the church, if He died to redeem you, if He secured your eternal salvation, you are as sure and certain as the one who attained your salvation for you. **THAT IS JUST GOOD NEWS.**

And, think about it. Look at verse four again. Notice what he says here. *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*<sup>16</sup> Now it is evident that by all men whom God would have saved, it can't mean every individual without exception. It can't mean that in the broad sense of that word, because if that is what his will is, if it is his will that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, everybody is going to be saved. Because who has resisted his will? See, that is the thing. That is where men get confused and they try to make God out like one of us. God doesn't desire. God wills. He accomplishes. When he said, *"Let there be light,"* it wasn't He was just sitting there thinking, hoping and wishing that light would exist. He said, *"Let there be light,"* and what was it? **There was light.** And when he willed that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, listen, **THEY WILL BE.**

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<sup>13</sup> John 6:37.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Acts 2:47.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

Did you know that it is recorded in God's Word that there are some that will believe a lie by God's own will, by God's own appointed, that he has appointed them that they should believe a lie that they all should be damned. That is God's will. Now you tell me about that one. People want to say, "Well, he wants everybody." Well, what are you going to do with that one, that he has appointed them to believe a lie that they might be damned?

It is God. And that is not the god that your momma and your daddy told you about. That is the God of this book. He does things after the counsel of his own will.

Now if you go back and look where we read a moment ago there in 1 Timothy 2:1, God the Holy Spirit tells us to pray for who? Every sort of man. Who? Rich, poor, kings, paupers, bond, free, male, female, young, old. Why? Because God will have all men or all sorts of men, that is what that word "all" means, all sorts, from all walks of life. And that is what the Scriptures tell us. He has chosen a group of people out of every kindred, nation, tongue and people. He has chosen some of all. I am going to try to get this right now. He has chosen not all without exception, but all without distinction. He didn't choose and He did not purpose to save everybody. God in this covenant of grace purposed to save a particular people, the people of his choice. People say, "Well, that is just not fair." Again, if He hadn't have chosen, nobody would have been redeemed. If He hadn't purposed, not one would be in glory.

Listen. All have gone out of the way. There is none righteous, no not one. They are all gone out of the way. They have all become unprofitable. The poison of asps is under their tongue. The way of God they have not known. That is us. And if He hadn't have stepped into our lives, we would have continued along that broad way that would lead ultimately to destruction.

But notice this: It says not only will He have them to be saved, but it says he will have them come to a knowledge of the truth. Now what is this knowledge of the truth that He is talking about here? Well, it is the knowledge of Christ who is truth and the faith in him and truth of the gospel as it ends in Christ Jesus, not merely a head knowledge of it. You think about this. Every person who has ever been saved, they are brought to such knowledge which is owing to God's sovereign will and good pleasure, who hides the knowledge of his truth. God tells us that he hides the knowledge from the wise and prudent. And who has he revealed it to? To babes, to the foolish.

I tell you what. He gave his Word to Jacob and Esau, right? He called Abram. Remember him? Abraham hadn't done anything for God to have mercy on him. God sought him and called Abram when he was an ungodly stargazer. He told him, "Get out." Let's go back a little further. He chose Noah. I always have loved that, "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*"<sup>17</sup> How do you find grace? How do you find unmerited favor? Was it like Noah was walking around outside just begging and pleading? No. God chose him. I don't know why. There was a multitude of folks back then. And I will guarantee you there was probably some that were more moral and more noble than Noah was. But God does things his way, the way that glorifies and honors him.

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<sup>17</sup> Genesis 6:8.

Notice verse 5 now. Here is the next answer. Salvation, **secondly**, is entirely the work of God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”*<sup>18</sup> He makes it very clear. How many gods are there? **JUST ONE**. And listen. He is the creator of all men and in a providential way, He is the Savior of all men. Every man without exception, man or woman who is on this planet, **who gives them life, liberty and freedom? Who makes their hearts beat? Who provides food for them and clothing for them and life and all the things that pertain to it?** Even the heathen who hates God, God gives him everything, right? So God does watch over all men and women without exception, Jew or Gentile in the providential way.

But listen. God the Father has taken Gentiles into the covenant of grace along with Jews. And that is what he is teaching these people here. He has loved them with a special distinguishing love because He chose them in Christ unto salvation. And he has sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into this world to redeem them. And in time he calls them by his grace. He regenerates them by his gospel. He sanctifies them. Adopts them. Pardons and justifies them. Who does He do this for? All sorts of men. And if you will notice it says there is one God and there is one mediator. Now what in the world is a mediator? What does that mean to you and me? What do you need a mediator for? Well, you need a mediator if there is a conflict.

I like the way it is translated, I think it is over in the book of Job maybe, about that there is a daysman between. I think that is where it is at. It is the word daysman. Do you know what it actually means, how that word “*daysman*” would be translated in our day? It is an umpire. It has to do with two parties and these two parties, do you know what? They are not at peace with one another. They are at variance one with another.

And between them, thank God, between the offended one which is God and the offending party which was God’s elect who had offended God in their representative man Adam. There stood, thank God, one mighty to save, who stood between us and this offended God and he laid hold on God and he laid hold on God’s elect and what did he do? He brought the two parties together. And what did he plead? He didn’t plead what they had done. He didn’t plead their faith. He pled his blood and his righteousness as the fulfillment of all of their salvation. That is our only hope and that is our only plea.

And listen to me. He makes certain that they are saved to everlasting happiness. And who is this mediator? There is one mediator, one who can lay hold on God and lay hold on sinful men and bring them together, the man Christ Jesus. It wasn’t just Christ as the Spirit, but who? Christ as God man, the mediator who could offer body and soul before a true and living God in such a way that would satisfy God’s law and justice.

And then, finally, verse 6. Here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> answer: Salvation is accomplished through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself. Nobody took His life from him. Do you see that?

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.

He, “gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”<sup>19</sup> Now listen to me. It says here that he gave himself a ransom for all. What did the mediator give as a ransom for men? There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. What did he offer to God? **HIMSELF**. Himself, his body and soul which were both made an offering for sin. What else did he offer? He offered his life. You think about this. Everything that God required of you this morning Christ did it all. God requires of you this morning and of me this morning that I love him with all my heart, mind, soul strength and love my neighbor as myself. And listen. I know I cannot do that. I wish I could. But I can't. Nonetheless, God still requires it. So who did it? Christ did it. He did not do it as a private person. All that obedience, when he opened not his mouth and he went as a lamb dumb before his shearers. He opened not his mouth. He never railed. He never spoke back, but stood there and took everything patiently and obediently. He did not do that for himself. He offered himself for you and for me.

And it shows here that he offered himself a ransom. A ransom. What is a ransom? A ransom price for us. In other words, he offered himself in their stead. Have you ever seen a movie where they have got somebody that is taken captive by somebody? And you know, in almost every movie they always make it where some brave police officer will go up and trade himself to gain the captives freedom. They say: Take me in their place.

That doesn't even begin to compare to what our Lord Jesus Christ did. He gave himself a ransom for you and for me. He took our place. Everything that we deserved he bore. I love that verse. He bore our sins in his body on the tree. It did not make him a sinner. It did not make him the greatest sinner of all time and it did not affect his person. Christ by imputation bore the guilt, penalty and condemnation of our sin in his body. And when he had it imputed to him, what did God's law and justice require of that person, that mediator? His death. Not just death for a day or a week or a year, but for eternity. And he offered it. And he offered it for all.

That is what it says here. He offered himself... he gave himself a ransom for all. Not for every individual. Because, listen. If he had offered himself for every individual and gave himself a ransom, a payment price for every individual, every individual on this planet would go free. That is how effectual his blood is.

If Christ had died for one or if he died for 10 billion, it required the same offering. It would affect the same thing. In this text it means that Christ gave himself a ransom for all sorts of men. Here is what Paul said about himself: “*Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*”<sup>20</sup> “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save [who?] sinners.*”<sup>21</sup> All sorts. If you can say good sinners and bad sinners, he died for some of all, whether they are moral and sincere and dedicated or whether they are the most immoral pervert on the planet. If Christ died for him, do you

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Timothy 2:6.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Timothy 1:13.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Timothy 1:15.



know what? If he gave himself a ransom for them, they are free. They are free, free indeed.

And that is what he is talking about there in our text. He gave himself a ransom for all. And listen. This is the thing, to be testified. And that word “testified.” Do you know what that means? To be revealed in due time. And what happens in each successive generation as we preach this gospel? All those whom God the Father loved before time, whom he sent his Son into this world to suffer and bleed and die for in time will in time, as they come under this sound of the gospel be regenerated and converted and be brought to see what they have been given by virtue of their oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is revealed to the world. One day at the judgment it is going to be revealed who they are. And it won’t be based on morality or sincerity, but it will be based totally and completely on this one great glorious truth. There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself for you.

Did he give himself for you? I tell you, if he did you know what salvation is. You know it is not a wish or a desire or a maybe hope so kind of issue. You can go home this afternoon and tonight when you put your head down on your pillow you can rest assured that you are sure and certain for heaven. And that is not vain presumption. That is just taking God at his written word based on the truth that he has revealed to us in this gospel.

May the Lord bless the reading of his Word and bless us together as we seek to grow in grace and knowledge of him. Let’s stand together and we will be dismissed. I appreciate your presence this morning. The Lord bless you and keep you until we see you next Lord’s Day.

David [?] would you dismiss us, please?