***Salvation as an Appropriation;
and, Lordship Salvation

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-043***

We are studying Colossians 1:3-8. Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 21.

**Appropriated**

The Colossian Christians, at some point in time, through someone (perhaps their pastor-teacher, Epaphras), had received the gospel information of the grace of God. They had believed the gospel as God's truth, and they had appropriated salvation through trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior. I want you to notice the word "appropriated:" They had "appropriated" salvation through trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior. This free grace salvation gave them for certain a future hope of eternal life in heaven with God.

**Commitment**

This hope of salvation, reserved in heaven, resulted in the Colossians' commitment to the doctrines of their faith in Jesus Christ, and in mental attitude love for all believers. Please notice the word "commitment." They committed themselves to the body of divine truth, and to an attitude of love toward all believers.

**Saving Faith**

The faith which saves a person (we have pointed out) consists of three elements. This little threefold diagram will help you to understand what is involved in saving faith. And that's what we're talking about here. Saving faith is a faith which saves. Many people have faith which does not save, because that faith is lodged in the wrong object.

**Knowledge**

Now, for a person to be saved, wherever he is in this world, he must first of all start with knowledge. This is a knowledge of the gospel of the grace of God received through Jesus Christ. That is the first step toward heaven. If you don't have the knowledge of the gospel, you will not go to heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 identifies that the gospel. Paul says, "For I delivered to you, as of first importance, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the 12."

Please notice in this presentation: "I delivered to you," Paul says, "as of first importance." This is the first, and most important, thing in any human being's life: the knowledge of the gospel of the grace of God. And what he presents as of first importance is something that he did not make up, but he received. And he didn't even receive it from other apostles. He received it directly from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: namely, that Christ paid the penalty of sin for every human being. That death was evidenced by the fact that He was buried in that tomb. And the fact that the penalty was accepted by God the Father was indicated by the fact that He was raised back from the dead to life, as the Scriptures predicted He would be; and, that His resurrection was confirmed to hundreds and hundreds of people – not to believers only, but to people who were alive, and who could testify to His resurrection.

We may also add the Scripture of Acts 20:24. Knowledge of the gospel is the first step to eternal life. Acts 20:24: "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself," the apostle Paul says, "in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God,"

So, the apostle Paul says, "My life has one message. It's the gospel of the grace of God. Outside of that, my life is not worth anything." That's very interesting: "I don't consider my life of any account, and as dear to me – only for one respect: in order that I may finish my course. Now, his course is also our course. That is the primary objective – showing people how they can get into heaven. That's why we have put together an evangelism brochure, such as we have produce here, which puts it all together without confusion; without misconceptions; and, on a proper authority basis, such that any thinking, honest person will be able to make a decision for or against Christ. And remember that salvation is an act of appropriation. That's all it is. It's accepting a divine offer. But we cannot accept what we don't know.

**Mental Ascent**

The second thing that is required is mental ascent. This means that the gospel of grace salvation is accepted by the individual as the truth. Many people hear the gospel; they blow it off; and, they do not want to hear it. They don't consider that it's true.

This summer in West Yellowstone, Montana, the man, that I offered the brochure to, gave me a sweep of his hand and said, "Oh, no, I'm not interested." He was telling me that he had heard about this gospel message before. He had heard about this talk about how to go to heaven. And he didn't think it was true.

Ephesians 1:13 says, "In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise," They listened to the message, and they concluded that it was the truth. The apostle Paul, in Romans 1:16, stresses the same concept: "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes: to the Jew first; and, also to the Greek," So, the apostle Paul understood that the gospel was the truth. And for that reason he was not ashamed of it.

**Trust**

The third thing that one must have if he is to be saved is trust. Up to now, we have told people the gospel. We have given them the information – the doctrine that they needed. We have invited them to believe it. The third thing that we invite them to do now, which they must do, is believe it by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior – trusting in His sacrificial death alone for their salvation from the lake of fire.

A classic enunciation of that is the passage of John 3:16, where the Lord says to Nicodemus, "For God so love the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but He will have eternal life,"

Also, in Act 16:31, we have the Philippian jailer who has come the first two steps. He has been prepared for these steps by being confronted by the miraculous power of God resting upon the apostle Paul in prison there. And he cries out, "What will I do? I don't want to go to lake of fire. I want to go to heaven." Paul says, very simply, "They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved; you, and your household."

So, the result is that Paul and Silas were able to tell the Philippian Jailer exactly what to do. He said, "I want to go to heaven." It's very simple: trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's an act of faith. No more; and, no less. It's an appropriation. And you must get that very clear in your mind, so that you do not steer people off into misconceptions.

Some of us did the old job of taking the act towards salvation, and we were never saved. Some people never get out of that. Some do get rescued, and they finally get the story straight. But Christians are the prime causes of people getting the gospel message misdirected, and giving them the wrong information so that they do not get saved.

Now, I'm not telling you that people who botch up the gospel will keep you out of heaven. If you are the elect, you can count on the fact that some other Christian, who has the story straight, will come, and they'll give you the information, and you'll get it, and you'll get your opportunity to believe.

Now, Mr. Gitchel has come up with a little idea on how to remember this little demand for saving faith. He uses the word K-Mart: "K" for "Knowledge;" "MA for "Mental Ascent;" and, "RT" for "Real Trust" – Knowledge; Mental Ascent; and, Real Trust. So, K-Mart does many things for you. It will also get you into heaven if you remember this little outline.

**The Results of Being Saved**

Now, the next thing we want to review is so that I'm sure that nobody in this congregation will ever make a mistake about this. This has to be right. And that is that there are certain results to being saved.

**Forgiveness**

The result of saving faith is that you have immediate forgiveness for your moral guilt. That's what we're trying to bring to people. They need forgiveness for their moral guilt.

Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him (Christ), we have redemption through His blood: the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace." When you have saving faith, because you have followed these three steps (these three elements are included), then your sins are forgiven. But that's not going to take you into heaven. That puts you back to where your moral guilt now has been paid for by the death of Christ. That's not going to take you to heaven. Your sins are forgiven. That's the negative part.

**Absolute Righteousness**

It requires a positive element. And it is important that you tell people that this is what God is also going to do for them: namely, that they will also receive the absolute righteousness of God. That means that now they are as good as Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him (God the Father made God the Son), Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." That is very simple. As I've told you many times, the Bible is written in plain, ordinary Hebrew, and plain every-day Greek, and translated into plain every-day, ordinary English – which words we understand. And what this says is that Jesus Christ swapped our moral guilt and our sin for His absolute righteousness. He swapped our unrighteousness for His perfection.

**Imputation**

So those are the two things that happen when you're saved. Your moral guilt is forgiven, and you have imputed to you the absolute righteousness of God. Now you are qualified to live in heaven.

**Repentance**

All of this is done by an act of appropriation on the part of the lost sinner. There are no deals; and, no commitments. If you want to lead a person away from true faith in Christ, you just tell him that he has to repent of his sin. Throw in a commitment like that, because when the Bible talks about repenting of sins, it is associated with believing. It is the opposite side of the coin of believing. You cannot repent until you believe. The way you repent is to change your mind about your sin, and about yourself, and about what you're doing, and about what you believe. The only way you *can* change your mind is to believe the gospel. And, as Paul puts it, you turn from your sin to Christ. That's repentance. But it's the two sides of the coin. On one side is believing; and, on the other side is repentance, and you can't separate them. So it's an appropriation. It is accepting the gift of God.

There's no way you can accept a gift from God by commitment. And the Bible makes that clear. If it comes as a result of a commitment, then you deserve it. You earned it. You paid for it. But if it comes as an appropriation, then it can be given to you as grace. You will never receive salvation by commitment. You can only receive it by an appropriation – taking what God has offered. All of this is the free gift of God, dependent only on believing the gospel of the good news, apart from human good works at any point: before you're saved; when you're saved; and, after you're saved. Good works do not enter into the picture at all.

Now either that's true, or Ephesians 2:8-9 is the greatest fraud ever perpetrated upon the human race by God the Holy Spirit. He says, "It's not of works, lets any man should boast." It's not of works before you're saved; not of works during your salvation; and, not of works at any point after you're saved.

**Presenting the Gospel**

I hope you have this clearly in mind. Here is our brief review. If you're going to present somebody with the gospel, here's how to lead them so that the three elements are there.

**Bad News**

**We are all Sinners**

First of all, you tell them that they are sinners. They are sinners inherently' and, they are sinners overtly. They have upon them the moral guilt of Adam; and, they also have upon them their own personal acts of sin. The Bible tells us this is true in Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," Every human being is guilty of sin, and every human being has fallen short of God's standard absolute righteousness, which is the glory of God.

**The Death Penalty**

There's a second piece of bad news, and that is that there is a death penalty for sin, which is eternal death, which means separation from God forever in the lake of fire. The Bible also tells us that that is the case. Romans 6:23 points that out: "For the wages of sin is death." Now that's the bad news: "I am a sinner; and, the penalty for my sin is eternal death in the form of separation from God in the lake of fire. And I can't do a thing about it, by my own efforts.

**Good News**

However, there is good news.

**Christ Died to Pay the Death Penalty**

Number one: Christ died to pay the penalty of death for your sins. Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates His Own love toward us, in that while we are yet sinners, Christ died for us," He died for us when we were sinners: not when we were trying to be better; not when we were trying to pay Him for something; and, not when we were trying to make a deal by promises: nothing. When we were sinners; when we were helpless; and, when we couldn't do a thing, He died and paid the price.

**You can be Saved by Faith**

The second piece of good news you should tell people is that you can be saved from the lake of fire by trusting in Jesus Christ alone to save you. Ephesians 2:8-9: "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that (referring to that salvation) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not as the result of works, that no one should boast."

So, here's a very simple concise way of presenting the gospel. You should memorize this: two points of bad news, and the verses that prove it; and, two points of good news, and the verses that demonstrate it. And then you urge people to believe this. This is the gospel you've told them. Urge them to believe it, and to accept Christ thereby as Savior. If they do not, they will not be saved. But they will be held accountable for the fact of their own rejection.

Now, what is the biblical basis of salvation? That helps clear up a lot of the confusion between appropriation of salvation and salvation by commitment. John 6:47: "Jesus says, 'Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life," And in the context preceding this, you'll see that the person that he is referring to is Himself – He who believes on Jesus Christ as the bread of life, who can give you the sustenance for eternal life (who can give you spiritual life). "Verily, Verily (truly, truly) I say to you, he who believes has eternal life," The way to secure eternal life in heaven is by an act of faith in Jesus Christ. The context indicates that he is the object of that faith.

For example, compare John 6:44: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day," That verse makes it very clear that when Jesus talks about believing (he who believes), he's talking about believing in Him as the Savior. But nobody's going to come to Him as Savior unless God the Father has first chosen Him for salvation.

Now, this is not something that you and I talk about in the midst of unbelievers. This is something we talk about here among ourselves as part of a doctrine that we are to know and to understand. It is helpful to us to understand and know why it is that some people simply cannot grasp the simplicity of the gospel, and why they cannot get into that lifeboat and get off the sinking ship of the eternal death that is stamped upon them in their sin nature. The reason for that is that God has not drawn them. And unless God draws you to salvation, you will never come to salvation. It is also my personal opinion, which is a terrible thing to say, because I usually don't say that, but I think I have good reason for it – that of all the 12 disciples Jesus had, Peter, James, and John were an inner circle. They were at the heart and the mind and the soul of Jesus as the others were not – Peter, James, and John. And from that, I think that I have I think good basis for the conclusion, and it has helped me a great deal to know this – that not all Christians are going to walk close to the Lord.

A church with a cutting edge to lead people into the deep things of God is not going to be the popular church, by the simple fact that most Christians are not Peter, James, or John. They're not going to be able to get into the innermost things of what the Bible calls "the deep things of the Spirit of God." Most people are out there in that shallow, exciting realm of talking about the Lord, and running special things, and having special classes for special categories, and things are jumping and jiving. But when it comes down to doctrine, understandable in great reality that carries us to the highest peaks of relationships with God – that's missing. And people don't know how to make doctrine work. But when you don't let it work, and when you don't pay attention to it, and when you don't learn it, you will learn that it's important by some monstrous tragedy somewhere along the line from here to eternity, and you will discover and look back and say, "You know, God is true. And doctrine is right. And doctrine does work. And only when we are fools do we turn our back upon it.

The Lord Jesus says here that some of you are going to go on to salvation, and some of you who have been called are going to walk, and be capable of walking, in the deep things of the Spirit of God. The particular mission of Berean Church for over four decades has been that outer orbit of believers, because they're not at the inner core. They are the outer orbit of believers who appreciate, and who are capable, of being a Peter, James, and John in relationship to Jesus Christ. They're capable of coming into that inner circle of the deep things of the Spirit of God. And they're in the outer orbit, because most of the time what's going on here in the operation of local churches, and in the big-time churches especially, doesn't have any place for them. Those are the folks who are the backbone, who carry a great deal of the work of the Lord out there, but they're in the outer orbit. There are not that many. So, you go for the big crowd because that's where the money is, and that's where the success is.

That is the case unless God comes in and He says, "I'm going to play a special game with you again this time. I'm going to play Gideon with you. I'm going to strip you down to very few people, but who are hardcore, innermost people in the heart of God. Gideon, I'm going to give you 300 people, and then I'm going to set you with all the facilities, and all the material, and everything you need. You're not going to be dependent on that gang out there who like to play church. And you're not going to have to even depend upon that outer orbit of Christians who are near to my heart, but who have limited resources. I'm going to overflow you with such capacity of material resources that your voice is going to create a reformation (a reverberation) wherever it is heard. And God loves to do that.

Here and there, the great voices that are shaking up the political, and the economic, and the educational world, and society in general are the voices of those outer orbit Christians who are near to the soul of God (the apple of His eye), and whom He has showered with the material resources to get their voice out where it cannot be silenced.

So, when He has called you to eternal life, it is on the basis of faith in Christ: "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." Period. What does "believe" mean? It means to accept (to appropriate) salvation as a free gift from God. Saving faith is therefore trusting Christ alone to save you from the lake of fire, and to ensure your destiny of eternal life in heaven. The Greek word "pisteuo" (pist-yoo'-o), P I S T E U O, which is the word for believe in the Greek, means "to trust." That's all. It means to simply accept with full confidence what you're told. There are no deals. There is no trying to make some arrangement. There are no promises which you're not going to keep anyhow. But it is only by accepting, with no good works added. "Pisteuo" cannot mean anything else in the Greek language except "to trust."

Now, here in John 6:47 is a clear expression of salvation by free grace received from God by a childlike trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. And there is only one way to be saved in Scripture, and here it is: "Truly, Truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." How dare you add anything more to believe? How dare you say anything to degrade the concept of believing for salvation without anything else? How dare you degrade; how dare you criticize; and, how dare you condemn that salvation is by the grace of God? It's a gift, it's an appropriation. It's not through a commitment deal. This is a childlike trusting acceptance.

And I remind you that this book of John was written for one explicit purpose given to us at the very end. In John 20:30-31, John says, "Many other signs, therefore, Jesus also performed in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book." John says, "I've written a lot of signs to prove that Christ was God, and everything He claimed to be, but there's a lot that I have not put in this book, but these that I have written, I have written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ (He is the promised sent One), the Son of God (He is deity), and that, believing, you may have life in His name." How dare you contaminate the grace of God's salvation by adding something to it to confuse some poor lost sinner who needs to have his life changed through the power of the grace of God – nothing but to believe that you may have life? And this whole book is written for that purpose. Dozens of times, it tells you how to go to heaven, and there is never a single bit in the way of a work added. And never one time in this whole book are you told to repent to be saved.

What a travesty! What a monstrous deception on the part of the apostle John, if you must do something else besides believe to be saved, and he never mentions it even once. The key to salvation in this book is simply trusting in Christ, as God's Son, to take us to heaven on the basis of His atonement, which He made on the cross for our sins. He covered us. And thus, being saved, I stress again, is an act of appropriation. It's accepting God's free gift of free grace salvation. John 1:12 stresses the appropriation factor. This clenches it. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him (Jesus Christ), to them gave He the right (the authority) to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. But as many as received Him." How do you receive Jesus Christ? The end of the verse tells you: "You believe in His name." You have genuine saving faith. You have the information of the gospel. You say, "Yes, it's true. And then you trust yourself to Christ to get you into heaven. You appropriate His offer.

No human works or promises are to be added to the work of Christ on the basis of one’s salvation. Romans 4:4-5 says that grace excludes works. "It's by grace that Abraham was saved apart from any works." And then Romans 11:6 says: "If you add some works to believing in Christ, you will go to hell. You cannot add a commitment to salvation and go to heaven. It's only believing (trusting) in Christ. It's all of grace, or not at all. Adding any human action to believing in Jesus Christ as one's Savior removes the grace basis of salvation, so you'll remain lost. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that it's got to be by grace without work, or it's not grace.

**Lordship Salvation**

Now, we have a term which has come into popular Christian discussion in recent years. It's called salvation by making Christ your Lord. And it is often expressed by coming to Christ and, making him Lord and Savior. They get the things backwards, even when they present it. But lordship salvation is a concept of saving faith which is totally false. And it's important that you understand this. Now, the scholars at Dallas Theological Seminary have very effectively refuted that along with the scholars at our new seminary, Chaffer Theological Seminary at Huntington Beach in California. The boys out there are even brighter, in some respects, than the Dallas boys, and they nailed the coffin shut. So this issue, I'm only going to brief you on, without going to a lot of detail in the theological circles. The problem has been pretty well defined, and the danger has been pretty well identified by very competent people.

What this raises is the question of how for sure that someone has exercised saving faith, and that he is going to heaven. Now, that is not an improper question, and it's an understandable question. You and I all know people who are church attenders and church members, and we look at them sometimes, and we have a question by how they live, and how they talk, and how they act – whether they're saved. I mean, these are people who fluctuate sometime are noble examples of the Christian, and then a very degraded type of personality. And we wonder: What's going on here with this person? And in the back of our mind, we wonder, "Has this person ever been saved?"

Now, it is true that the apostle John, in one of his epistles, says of a group of people: "They went out from us." These people were hot, and jumping, and wild among us at one time. They went out from us; they left us; they deserted; and, they moved off. But he says that's because they were never part of us. They went out from us because they were not of us. Those people indeed were never saved at all. And that's usually what happens to people who are pretenders to salvation. Sooner or later they get peeled off, especially if your church has great integrity in its devotion to the Word of God as inerrant, and in great integrity in explaining the doctrines of scripture, with the competence of the original languages. That kind of a person is not going to hang around in a church like that. He will butt out very quickly.

However, this does raise the question. The answer of Lordship salvation to whether a person is really saved that you can determine it by his lifestyle – the way he lives. It is not simply by the fact that, at some point in time, he has trusted in Jesus Christ as his Savior. The prodigal son becomes a non-son when he started living with the pigs. Now, it is true that one time he lived as nobly. He was in his father's house. He was a son. And he could go to his father and say, "Dad, am I your son?" And the father would say, "Yes, you were born into my family. I remember the happy day. You are my son." But after he became a prodigal son, and went down to living like the pigs, and with the pigs, could you imagine him going to his father and saying, "Father, am I your son?" And the father says, "Well, I'm not sure. The way you are living is not the way I live. Your ideals are not my ideals. My principles of moral are not the way you're living. The things that I believe that are true about God are not the things that you are reflecting in your lifestyle. I'm not sure whether you're my son."

Now, you would say, "That's ridiculous. That's stupid. The guy turned into a dog, but he is still the old man's son, whether he likes it or not." And that's the point. Sonship or daughter ship cannot be dissolved. And yet, a person in the position of familial relationship can still act in very ungodly ways. What lordship salvation, therefore, is doing, in effect, is telling you that saving faith is not an act of appropriation of God's gift of free grace salvation, but that it is an act of commitment. It is an act of commitment of obedience to Christ as one's Lord. It's a commitment to a godly lifestyle. And that's what has brought about this using of a biblical term. I don't want you to misunderstand that. The Bible speaks about Christ as Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because He is always Lord. That's why He's called "Lord and Savior." He is always positionally Lord. He is that automatically. You don't make him that. But whether he is experientially your Lord, that is the question. That is where you come into the picture.

**Savior and Lord**

However, He is Lord, and He is Savior. But He becomes that in the reverse order. First He must be Savior by act of appropriation of free grace gift from God. Then you are in a position to make Him your Lord in your experience by your obedience to the Word of God. He is, after all, also your Savior all the time. The Bible tells him that He is the Savior of all men. But He is that positionally. He is potentially the Savior of all men, for He died for all. He is only the Savior of those who trust in Him for the covering that He has made for their sins. Then He becomes their Savior in actuality.

So, to be saved under lordship salvation, you must not only make Jesus Christ your Savior, but you must also make him your Lord. So, if we look at somebody, and we say, "He says that he has received Christ as Savior. And maybe he's a son or a daughter in your family. You remember the day that that genuinely was done. And you remember the days when he lived as that were true. Then you suddenly see that this child acts in a way that is not a Christian way, and is not the way of God. Then you say, "They never committed themselves to Christ, and they never were really saved." And you come up with the idea that some people who you thought were saved were never saved.

So, you tell them, "You need to get saved." But what they need to be told is: "You need to make Christ your Lord." And here's how you do it. You repent of your sin, and you express that repentance by confession of what you have done, and that confession constitutes a declaration to God that you agree with Him that this is wrong, and that you will cease and desist. And the result is that you'll be brought into God's blessing and control of the sin nature once more, because that's what you want. What you want is control of the sin nature. That's what's messing up the life. And you should not tell a person that he's not saved, when what he needs is to learn how to control his sin nature through the Word of God, and through walking with the Spirit of God.

When the Old Testament spoke about the coming Messiah was to have – what was provided by God the Father for the humanity of Christ, was that He would live His life in the knowledge of doctrine and in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the only way you live in this life, and beat Satan at his game. You live under the knowledge of the principles of doctrine, to which you respond with positive volition, and the power of the Holy Spirit to put those things into practice. That's the only way Christ lived in His humanity. And because He lived that way, we can do the same. You can beat the devil at every sin; at every turn; and, at every point in time. But I guarantee you that if you sit in church, and all you're hearing is spiritual talk about inspiration; challenge; and, exciting things, and you're in a program, you're going to go down the tube. You at least should be where you have a chance. Whether you blow it or not, you should have a chance to know how to live like Jesus lived, with the knowledge of doctrine to guide you under the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Repentance**

What Lordship salvation, therefore, does, because it's making a deal with God of a commitment, is that it brings in repentance of your sins as a separate act from believing. It makes repentance mean a total subjection to the will of God as a part of saving faith. Conduct is interjected. And the Bible does not say that in the passage about Jesus in John 6:47. Repentance in the Bible is a change of mind expressed through belief in Christ.

So, Lordship salvation says that John 6:47 really says this. Now, follow it carefully, and you'll see how serious a misconception this is. John 6:47 in Scripture says, "Truly, Truly I say to you: he who believes has eternal life." Lordship salvation says that what this means is: "Truly, Truly I say to you: he who repents of his sins believes and submits totally to My will has eternal life". Do you see the difference? "Truly, Truly I say to you: he who repents of his sins believes and submits totally to My will has eternal life". Now, you tell me if that's what that verse is saying.

However, when you put lordship salvation together, that is what it is telling us. Lordship salvation teachers justify this interpretation by saying that the word "believe" in the New Testament means submission to the will of God. And that is not true. Believe is the word "pisteuo" (pist-yoo'-o), and it does not mean submission to the will of God. It means "trusting." It means "trusting God to do something for you." Lordship salvation teachers are afraid that free grace salvation, which is obviously what John 6:47 teaches, encourages licentious and immoral living. And I am perfectly sympathetic with anybody who is concerned with licentious and immoral living. That concerns all of us, whether in ourselves or in somebody else, close or distant from us. And we have certainly no approval. And please don't insult us, and don't slander us (because we are true to a biblical statement), by telling us that we are teaching people that they can live any way they want to and still go to heaven.

If you are a born-again believer, and you live out of the will of God, and out of the rules of God, you'll be brought into conviction. And if you cease and desist, and confess, all will be well, and you'll be on your way again. But if you persist in living in an ungodly way, which you can do; and, if you persist in being the prodigal son or daughter, then God will bring various stages of discipline which are enunciated in I Corinthians 7. You'll find yourself psychologically burdened. Then you'll find that your body begins to break down. You will have physical ailments. And that's signal number 2, to cease and desist. And then the third stage will be that God will simply take your life. And He will take your life. And where do you think you'll go?

**Saul and Samuel**

Saul, the day before his death, had no more communication with God whatsoever. He was so cut off from God that he, in desperation, went to a fortune teller, and said, "Tell me what's going to happen to me the next day here. I've got a battle coming up with the Philistines. What's going to happen?" And he wanted the fortune teller to conjure up Samuel, who had died, to tell him what was going to happen. And when the fortune teller went through her hocus-pocus, and indeed God, this time, who never ordinarily has the dead speak to the living, did bring Samuel out. It scared the fool out of the fortune-teller, because she didn't expect this to happen. It really was true. She knew it wasn't her demon familiar spirit who was talking this time. And Samuel said, "Saul, when God will no longer speak to you because of your unrepentant heart, you call on me? Okay, I'll tell you Saul: "Tomorrow, you're going to be just like I am: dead. You are going to be the way I am. You are going to be dead, and you will be where I am."

Where was Samuel? In heaven. Saul was under that horrendous burden of sin. It was a capital crime in Israel, enunciated by Saul himself, to go to a fortune teller. If you went to a fortune teller in Israel, and you would be executed, because you're dealing with demons. And where did Saul go? To heaven. And there he was – a very terrible sinful man at that point in time.

So, don’t tell us that we are condoning evil living. We're not. We're giving you fair warning, and you have learned well the doctrine of the sin unto death. There's nobody in this congregation that doesn't know that, if he has half a brain.

So, don't call it cheap grace and easy believism. That is the accusation of the lordship salvation teachers. They call our grace cheap, and they call it easy believism. The truth is that the marvelous, unconditional love of God extended in free grace salvation is a motivation for our personal godliness. We want to do right because of what Christ has done for us. We also want to do right because we get to the point where we're smart enough to know that God's laws make everything work right. God's laws are the fun way to do things. Breaking of God's laws is the un-fun way to do things. It may seem fun at the moment, but it's very un-fun in the long run.

Lordship salvation teachers thus redefine saving faith as a submission to Jesus Christ, rather than simply trusting Him, as a commitment. They make it a commitment instead of an appropriation.

Lordship salvation also likes to make a distinction between what they call head belief and heart belief. In effect, Lordship salvation calls for the lost sinner to make a deal with God, to save him with a promised standard of conduct as a Christian, if God will do that. And that is not free grace salvation. The only way you can believe the gospel is with your head: "For with the heart man believes unto salvation." The heart in the Bible is the head. It's where you make the commitment (the ascent) and you decide to trust Him.

False faith is defined as falling below the biblical standard of conduct for a true believer by lordship salvation. If you fall below their standard, that they set up as appropriate conduct for a Christian – more than this, you're not saved. Now they are careful not to say, "Not at all," because they know that some people are going to do things wrong. So they give a little leeway.

We close with Matthew 7:20. Please notice it. Lordship salvation teachers come down very hard on this verse: "So then you will know them by their fruits." This verse is used to prove that one's salvation is confirmed by the fruit that your life produces – your conduct. But the context of verse 20, if you will look back, you will discover, does not deal with personal conduct as the fruit of your life, but with what one teaches as God's true doctrine. Matthew 7:15-18: "Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, and the bad tree bears bad fruit". The good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Of whom are we speaking of? False prophets. What do prophets bring? They bring the message from God. It is the teachings that these prophets bring that is the false fruit. And that's how you know when some clown on TV who has the big exposure, and the big money, and the big reputation is a false prophet because of what he teaches.

One Sunday morning, one man came up to me. He was very knowledgeable in the Word of God. He'd been watching Oral Roberts on TV that morning. And he said, "You know, I think that Oral Roberts is a false prophet." I said, "Hooray! I'm glad you came aboard. How do you know that?" He said, "Well, by what he says. You are right. That's the fruit that identifies him for what he really is. Don't get trapped into that business of: "I know a Christian by how nice you act.

The use of the analogy of the tree here, baring good fruit, as being the matter of teaching true doctrine is further confirmed by Matthew 12:33-37: "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth what is good; and, the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth what is evil." Brings forth from what? From what he says – from his doctrinal teaching: "And I say to you that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words, you shall be justified. And by your words, you shall be condemned." What is that saying? That's saying exactly what Matthew said earlier: "By their fruits you shall know them." What are their fruits? What they teach?

So, the passage here, used so by the Lordship salvation people to prove that salvation is a commitment and not an appropriation, is totally false. What this patch passage teaches is that believers can detect a false prophet by the fruit of doctrine which he teaches, which is false, in comparison to Scripture: By their words, not by their works, you shall know them.

As the Bereans of old, in great faithfulness, listened to the apostle Paul, and as they listened to his doctrine, they listened to it willingly.

Every now and then, recently, a man got up and walked out of our service. He heard something that offended him that he didn't like, and that wasn't acceptable to him. And it is killing me, because I can't remember what I said right at that time. And I've consulted with some of my more careful listeners, who noticed he left, and they couldn't quite remember, because it was innocuous to us, but it struck a core with him, and he walked out.

I had a Charismatic walk out on me one time a couple of years ago. I don't understand why, but he did. And he couldn't stand it. And all you have to do is pay attention and listen. And then you may make your decision. You can detect people by listening, but you have to listen. You listen to what they say, and then you will know that there is a false prophet in your midst.

So, the Bereans of old said, "We'll listen to you, Paul. We're not going to walk out. Boy, you make us uneasy.

A couple of Sundays ago, one of my good men here in the congregation said, "Boy, when you start walking on our feet, I very uncomfortable. But he didn't tell me to button up, and he didn't tell me I was wrong. But he was smart enough to know: "I'll listen, and I'm my own priest. I'll make my own decision, because that's what God's going to hold me responsible for.

So, the Bereans of old listened to Paul, and then they search the scriptures every day, and they confirmed that he's right. What he says is what is in the Bible.

God be praised for His free grace salvation. It is never contaminated with a commitment when all it is, is a gift to be appropriated.

Our Father, we thank you for this Berean Memorial Church, which is a unique work of God, as a realistic, workable, Bible-doctrine-based lifestyle. We tell people what they need to know, and we tell them what they need to do with it – to believe it, and act upon it. So, let's pray that we'll expand our voice of God's truth far beyond our corner. We're equipped to do it. We have a voice that's worth listening to. The religious con artists and the shallow public relations preachers are everywhere, but they're not going to fill the need. So, I'm asking you to pray that God, in this year of 1996, based upon the principles of Hebrew to guide us that we looked at today, that God would loosen our financial hands beyond our fondest dreams.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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