

What Saves Us?

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

One of the biggest Biblical debates today is regarding the issue of what saves us. The debate typically centers around whether or not a person has to be baptized. Regrettably, what often happens is the two debaters find passages which mention their favorite requirements and they argue them back and forth. In this lesson, we will get away from “their verses” and “our verses”. We want to see what “Jesus’ verses” say. In this lesson we will simply search through the scripture to see what is necessary for salvation.

Discussion:

- I. You may be surprised to hear it, the Bible actually reveals sixteen essentials to salvation.
 - A. **Acts 28:28; Philipians 1:28** – God the Father.
 - B. **II Thessalonians 2:13** – The Holy Spirit.
 - C. **Matthew 1:21; 18:11; Acts 4:12** – Jesus the Christ.
 - D. **Acts 15:11; Ephesians 2:5, 8** -- The grace (unmerited favor) of Jesus.
 - E. **Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:9** – The blood of Jesus.
 - F. **Acts 11:14; Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:21; 15:1** – The gospel.
 - G. **Romans 10:17; James 1:21** – The word of God.
 - H. **I Timothy 2:4** – Knowledge of the truth.
 - I. **II Thessalonians 2:10** – Love of the truth.
 - J. **Romans 8:24** – Hope.
 - K. **Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 10:9** – Faith. (**James 2:21-26**).
 - L. **Romans 10:9-10** – Confession of faith.
 - M. **II Corinthians 7:10** – Repentance.
 - N. **Romans 10:13** – Calling on the name of the Lord. But how do we do that?
 - O. **Acts 22:16; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21** – Baptism for the remission of sins.
 - P. **Matthew 10:22** – Endurance to the end.
- II. We must take it all.
 - A. I recognize, of course, that several of the above requirements for ultimate salvation overlap each other. For instance, hearing the gospel and having the knowledge of the truth are quite similar. However, we must make sure that when it comes to being saved, we recognize every single one of these things as required. Regrettably, we often hone in on the controversial requirements like baptism and forget that there is more to salvation than that. We must make sure that we are not converted to baptism, but rather that we are converted to Christ and to the entirety of His teaching.
 - B. According to **Psalm 119:160**, the sum of God’s word is truth. That is, we cannot take one statement from the Bible and claim to have all truth. Rather, we must look at all the Bible says on a topic. Thus, in our discussions regarding salvation. It does us no good to try to divide Bible verses between “us” and “them” and then lob them at one another. We have to take all of the verses together.
- III. Putting it all together.
 - A. Going through this exercise demonstrates something to us. First, it demonstrates that we cannot remove any of these requirements and be saved. For instance, without grace, we could have all the others but would never be saved. On the other hand, without baptism, we could have all the others and neither would we be saved. That God, in His Word, links each of these concepts or actions with salvation demonstrates that each of them is required and if even one is missing we don’t have all the pieces.

B. Additionally, we cannot take any of these verses to mean that only the one concept or action mentioned in that verse is all that is needed for salvation. For instance, we cannot bank on **II Thessalonians 2:10** and say, "I love the truth therefore I must be saved," if we have not repented of our sins, confessed our faith in Jesus or been baptized for the remission of our sins. Additionally, we cannot turn to **I Peter 3:21** and say, "I have been baptized. I must be saved," if we haven't repented of our sins or if we do not love the truth. What we actually learn is that these seemingly simple statements are actually more complex than they appear. **I Peter 3:21** can say that baptism saves, not because that is the only requirement, but because it is only biblical baptism if all the other requirements are in place. Without faith, it is not biblical baptism. Without repentance, it is not biblical baptism. Without knowledge of or love for the truth, who would be baptized? Therefore, Peter's statement includes the other requirements. In like manner, **Acts 16:30-31** though Paul only mentions belief, his statement includes confession of faith, repentance and baptism as well as everything else, because having faith in Jesus and His Word, means I believe all He said. Therefore, I cannot be said to have faith if I won't repent or be baptized, because then I obviously did not believe Jesus' teaching on repentance or baptism. Consider one final example. That **Acts 15:11** and **Ephesians 2:5-8** say we are saved by grace does not mean we can say, "Oh, God is gracious therefore I must be saved," if we have not repented and are not enduring in Christ to the end.

Conclusion:

The issue, therefore, is where are you on this spectrum? If you don't have all of it, you don't really have any of it. If you haven't been enduring in Christ but rather have turned from Him, then your earlier faith and obedience is not going to save you (**Ezekiel 18:24**). On the other hand, if you have never come to Christ in faithful obedience to begin with, you are not saved. Do you know and love the truth? Do you hope in Christ? Do you believe in Jesus? Have you repented of your sins? Then why not confess your faith in Jesus and be baptized for the remission of your sins today?