

060917
Jason Henderson
Akron Vineyard

Salvation 02

Last week we began a series having to do with salvation. And what we talked about was that salvation is a word that is unimaginable and unsearchable in its reality and implications. We often talk about salvation as though it is something that just happened to us 25 years ago when we walked the isle of a Baptist church, or whatever. But exactly what is it that happened to you when you walked the isle of that Baptist church?

Was it that you were forgiven for your trespasses and put back into the game of life...now with a clean slate, a new worldview, a different set of beliefs, and maybe one or more spiritual gifts? For many that's all that salvation means. What is salvation?

Well, as I said last week, salvation is everything that God has done for you, to you, and in you through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But what has He done? As I suggested last week, your lack of knowing the reality of salvation translates into a failure to live in the reality of salvation. That is much of what we talked about last week.

This week I want to start looking into exactly what we came to when we came to salvation. And what we have come to is an ending and a beginning. When you come to salvation, you come to a colossal ending. And an unthinkable beginning. A catastrophic destruction, removal, tearing down. And a whole new beginning. A tearing away, a removing as well as a making new of all things. A new life/kind/seed/man. A new creation. A new place. A new covenant. A new time. A new day. A new body – and I don't mean by that your new body, but rather you being changed from the body of one thing to the body of another. A vile body becoming a body of glory.

Salvation is, in reality, the complete destruction, termination, finality, and end of one man, one creation, one covenant, one seed, one place, one realm, etc. It is, on the other hand, the commencement, the establishing, giving, imparting, the inauguration of all those things made new in Christ.

And as I mentioned last week, many Christians who would hear this description of salvation would say “Jason, it didn't feel like all of that happened when I was born again!” But that is exactly my point. That is exactly the problem. It is not enough to know that you have salvation. You have to know your salvation...because you're feelings and experience come only with the knowing of salvation.

There is a story of a man in WWII who was retreating with his division through the woods – trying to escape an incredible barrage of mortar shells that were bombarding their encampment. The noise was incredibly loud. There was chaos in every direction.

Fire here, dead bodies there, explosions all around. His heart was racing and his adrenalin pumping as he sprinted through the trees. At some point along the way he felt a sting on his left side, but didn't even pay attention to it. He was just trying to stay alive.

Well, eventually he and his surviving comrades got far enough away that they were out of any immediate danger. And as he stood there amongst his friends and tried to catch his breath, he couldn't help but notice that they were all staring at him. At last he looked down to his left side only to realize that his arm had been completely blown off by shrapnel. In all the excitement and pandemonium, he didn't even know it was gone.

Salvation is a little bit like that. Something very significant, something substantial has been cut off. And yet our refusal to turn and see, and learn by His Spirit what He has done, what he has ended, what he has put away, can keep us running on through life as though nothing had happened.

And the natural mind, the natural man, does not agree with God about what has ended and what has begun. In fact, it is in direct conflict and enmity with God about what His cross has accomplished. The natural mind seeks to carry over into the new something of the old. It seeks to live in the new according to its understanding of the old. It seeks to offer in the new the best of the old. It seeks to live in the new according to the understanding of the old, the mind of the old. And all of this is "anathema". All of this is cursed. As Jesus says "you simply cannot put new wine in an old wineskin...it cannot contain it".

I once lived in a house with a man who had had his leg shot off by a shotgun. And he swore to me that for months or perhaps years afterwards he could feel the leg that was no longer there. He said it itched like crazy when he was trying to sleep. There is a medical term for that. Its called "phantom pain". Somehow the body, the nervous system, is not in agreement with the reality of something that has been removed.

The natural mind does not agree with God or understand what has been cut off. What has been removed. What has been rejected. It does not agree with God about who it is that is accepted. It does not agree with God about the nature and character of true righteousness, true identity, true purpose, true anything. And so that mind must bow to the Spirit of God and allow, like a little child, the Spirit who searches all things to make known to us a salvation that we have but do not comprehend.

Do you see what I'm saying here? I'm saying that you and I have no idea what salvation is apart from the Spirit unveiling it. Salvation is a lot bigger than what we thought. Salvation is a lot bigger than what we can think. It must be revealed.

We think its whatever the preacher said it was the day we got saved. And we generally hold onto that concept, and maybe add a few bells and whistles over the years. And yet salvation cannot be shown to you by a preacher...and certainly not on day one of new birth. **Salvation must be unveiled progressively as all that God has done for us, to us, and in us through the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

And all I'm hoping is that the words I speak will be used by the Spirit to unveil that which only He can show.

So...what is salvation? Salvation is first of all new life. It is the end of one kind, and the beginning of another kind. It is the destruction of one seed and the planting and increase of another. Salvation is not the bettering of what you are by nature. It is the death and burial of what you are by nature and the saving of your soul, the loving of your soul, (which is a vessel) by giving you the life and nature of Him who is eternal life.

I know many of us around here hear this very often. But I wonder if we really believe it. I talk to people all the time, and I know it is true of my heart as well...but nevertheless, I talk to people in whom I can see that there is an assumption that what we do and say and teach and lead and feel when we are Christians is somehow automatically Christ working in us. "Well, I'm a Christian, so I'm sure that was the Lord"

Its like as Christians we assume that suddenly, by nature, we bring forth Christ. And yet just the opposite is true. **Might I say that nothing that is natural to you is spiritual.** Apart from you being conformed to His death, being utterly transformed in nature by the renewing of your mind, nothing that comes natural to you will be Him. We are utterly contrary in nature. My mind is at best another mind. Scripture says it is "enmity with God" at its best. My love is at best another love...one that seeks its own gain. My righteousness is, at best, filthy rags, says the prophet Isaiah.

Jason, don't be so hard on yourself. No, don't say that. I'm not being hard on myself, or on you. I'm just agreeing with God. I'm just beginning to see something of salvation. Don't take that from me with false pity or self pity. There is a great rejection here. A rejection that was shown through countless types and shadows in the old covenant. Cain, rejected. Able accepted. Esau rejected. Jacob accepted. Ishmael rejected, Isaac accepted. Leah rejected. Rachel accepted. Manasseh rejected, Ephraim accepted. Saul rejected. David accepted. What did all of those people have in common? In every single instance I just quoted, it was ALWAYS the firstborn, that which was first, that which was natural, that which was there before, that was rejected. And the second, the new, was accepted.

I'm telling you that salvation involves a great rejection. Not of your soul, but of your kind, your nature. And He who is accepted begins to work through my absence. He is manifest through my conformity to death. He is seen when I get out of the way.

Isn't that what Paul said? My grace is sufficient for you Paul. In your weakness I can be strong. In your absence, I am manifestly present.

And so after new birth, Christ does not automatically come forth. It is not right or safe to assume so. **The only automatic after new birth is that you will automatically try to bring over into Christ that which stands in His way.** Like King Saul, you will automatically try to hold on to your kingdom, after David has already been anointed.

Like Esau, you will automatically try to hold onto your birthright when Jacob has already has it.

You will automatically, quite naturally, fail to see what He has done, and seek to offer up to Him what He has rejected. That is what is natural. Because Adam is natural. Adam is automatic, until Christ, your life, is revealed.

So salvation has to do with a death and ending of Adam. God's objective judgment and separating from His kind. And then a subjecting taking out of your heart what He has put out of His sight. And so its not just a death to certain things you used to do. Salvation has to do with the death of the one man, the kind, the adamic seed that did those things. Paul says that salvation is the "putting off of the old man together with his works"

I realize that some of what I will say this morning is review for some people. I have spoken of these things before. But I have felt impressed of the Lord to make sure that all of us who gather here on Sunday mornings are of one mind and one judgment as to the foundational reality that we are building on. I want to speak to whoever might be listening this morning. And you cannot hear this enough because its not a matter of hearing it, it's a matter of knowing it in such a way that it is the reality of life in you. That is a work of the Spirit, and not a matter of hearing teaching.

So lets go back and see this first man. Salvation is a transition from one man, one kind, one nature, one seed, to another. The first man was never the man that God was after. The first man was a type and shadow, the image and likeness in the natural (in some ways) of what the spiritual would be. But the first man was never the man that God desired. The first man was the Cain, the Esau, the Ishmael, the Saul. And yet, those who are born of that first man are offered the blessing of the second. We'll come to that.

In the garden of Eden, Adam was given a choice. But that choice was not merely a test of obedience. Obedience is certainly an issue here, I want us to see more than that. God gave Adam and Eve a choice between **two ways of living**. Man could live by the tree of life. In other words, man could live by the life of another, become a vessel of expression for the life of God (and of course, Jesus is the tree of life). Or, man could live by the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, man could live by what he knew, or thought he knew, was good and bad, and worthy and unworthy, etc.

In reality, that is the same choice we are faced with today. Will we allow ourselves, through the work of the cross, to become the body and expression of Someone altogether other than us? Or will we live out from our soul and become the expression of the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience. That is the choice - living by the life of another, so that you experience and express the spiritual life of God. Or living out of your soul, where you do what you think is good or evil in every circumstance. That's the choice that Adam had. The tree of life verses the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And so Adam's bad choice wasn't just a transgression. It was of course that. But it was a choice to "be like God" in the sense that Adam became his own boss. Adam lived by

his own judgments. Adam lived according to his knowledge. Adam turned down the offer of life. And so he came to understand something he was never supposed to know. He came to understand that He could live independently of God based on what He “knew” to be good and evil.

What was the heart of Adam’s sin? Not simple disobedience, but a desire to “be like God” as out from himself. Let me give pause for a moment and simply say that this lie of Satan’s is just as effective today as it was then. It is the lie that is behind every single religion and religious thought in the entire world. **It is the thought that something out from yourself can actually be like God.** It is the thought that apart from Him as life and source in you, that you can come up with something that is pleasing to God. It is this very lie that God confronts in Scripture in statements like “all of your righteousness is filthy rags”, “in your flesh dwells no good thing”, “all of the intents of the heart of man are only evil continually”, “there is no one who does good, not even one” “the flesh profits nothing”. “Apart from me you can do nothing”

What Adam found out, and what we need to find out, was that the problem with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil wasn’t the bad fruit, it was the entire tree. The problem is that both the good and bad fruit are **not** the tree of life. If you knocked all the evil fruit off that tree and throw it away, you still have the wrong tree. Its man’s tree, man’s way, man’s knowledge of good and evil. And that’s why John the Baptist says that Christ came to lay the axe to the root of that tree, because He was about to graft us into the tree of life.

So Adam chose to be like God. And after the fall, Adam reproduced after His own kind and after his own image (Gen 5:3). All that Adam could reproduce was Adam. He reproduced his own kind – the kind/nature of Adam. And so rather than becoming living vessels of the life of God, Adam (the kind) filled the earth with a sinful race who lived as their own source.

And there was nothing that could be done to improve that situation. You can’t improve that kind. You can’t fix it. You can destroy it. You can replace it. But you can’t fix it. What is there to fix? In order to fix something, it had to be good to start with. But here we have man simply living as his own source...and what comes out from him is sin and death. It is simply man exhibiting the wrong seed. It is simply the soul of man living by his own knowledge of good and evil.

And right away, Adam’s eyes are opened, he becomes utterly self-conscious. Self-aware. Self-absorbed. And he can see what he is apart from being clothed with Christ. He looks at himself as separate, cut off, unclothed...and then he commits the first act of religion in the Bible. He attempts to cover himself with something other than Christ. He hides behind a fig leaf. He attempts to disguise his nature. He puts on the first religious mask in history. Suddenly righteousness becomes about trying to cover himself up. What he can keep in check. What he can keep people from seeing.

But it doesn't matter. Adam reproduces Adam. And it doesn't matter what costume or perfume you put on Adam down through the ages, what religious mask, what tricks you pull to try to look contrary to what you are, you still have something after the image of its forefather, who refused to live by the tree of life, and chose to "be like God" living from himself according to what he thought was good and evil. You might fool people. You'll never fool God.

That nature cannot be covered or hidden. It must be destroyed and replaced by another nature – the nature of Christ. And so God, knowing that a fig leaf wouldn't do, replaced their fig leaf garment with a garment of animal skin – which was the very first demonstration (in type and shadow) that blood would be shed, and another life would be used to clothe Adam's kind.

But see here is the point for this morning – Salvation means a completely different kind. A completely different Seed. It is not the improvement or cleaning of the first. It is, in fact, its destruction.

The first several chapters of Genesis will show you a man that fell short. A man that cannot. A man that is corrupt. A man that is grievous to God. A man that is cursed. A man that is driven by the lusts of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. A man that God desires to wipe off the face of the earth. The flood was the type and shadow of that wiping...the cross was its fulfillment.

But you need to see this. You need to come into agreement with what God thought about that kind. You can see it right in the very beginning of the Bible. People might say "hey were do you get this notion that God needed to destroy the entire Adamic kind?" You get it all throughout the entire Bible, but starting right in the very beginning. Here, in the beginning of Genesis you can come to understand God's thought and understanding of this first man. You must reckon with statements like

Gen 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man in his erring; he is flesh.

Gen 6:5 And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Gen 6:6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved to His heart.

Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth,

Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth. And, behold, it was corrupted! For all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.

Gen 6:13 And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me,

Gen 6:17 And behold! I, even I, am bringing a flood of waters upon the earth in order to destroy all flesh (in which *is* the breath of life) from under the heavens.

Why do you have to understand and agree with God's thought and view of the Adamic kind? So that you can understand what the cross was. The cross was flood of Noah fulfilled. It was the rejection and putting away of that entire kind and the offering to you of an altogether different kind. The cross was the destruction of which the flood was

only the type and shadow. The cross was the grand, the monumental ending, the judgment of man. Jesus says in John 12 speaking of His death “now is the judgment of the world”.

It was, in God’s view, a far greater judgment than the flood of Noah’s day. It was, in fact, in a very real sense, the end of Adam and his world. And yet that world goes on, but not in Christ. Judged and dead, and now “the dead who hear My voice can by Me live”.

But my point is that we must know that salvation is a total rejection of one man, one kind, one seed – Adam – what you were by nature. And the birthing, the planting, the beginning of an entirely different Seed. You and I must reckon with this. You and I must come to see what has been cut off. We must know more than the fact that we have salvation. We must know the salvation that we have.

We have a salvation that is, in fact, the circumcision of the entire body of flesh. Col 2:11 “we were circumcised, not with hands, but in the removal of the body of flesh through the circumcision of Christ”. But we are like an army commando so busy running through the woods, in the hustle and bustle of the old creation, that we have failed to notice what He has rejected and cut off. It still feels so real. An itchy leg that isn’t even there.

We have salvation, but we have failed to see what salvation is. And the first thing that salvation is, is a new man. A new kind.